MEET JACK DAZZO

Jack Dazzo was one of my favorite animators as I grew up, but I'd never even heard of him. That's because commercials don't have credits. Dazzo is an unsung master of the profession. Unsung, that is, until you talk to the folks he worked with, then his name is constantly raised and praised.

Born in Brooklyn during 1926, Joachim Dazzo got serious about drawing around age 7. Health issues plagued Jack. As a boy, a botched tonsillectomy left a fragment of tooth in his lung. The lung was later removed. At 16 he wrote a letter applying for a job with Disney. The response was that he lived too far away.

October 29, 1943

Mr. John Dazzo
1353 - 69th Street
Brooklyn, New York

Dear Mr. Dazzo:

We have your letter of October 18th, with regard to securing employment.

Unfortunately, at the present time, it is not company policy to secure personnel from outside the Los Angeles area. We are therefore returning to you, herewith, the drawings which you submitted.

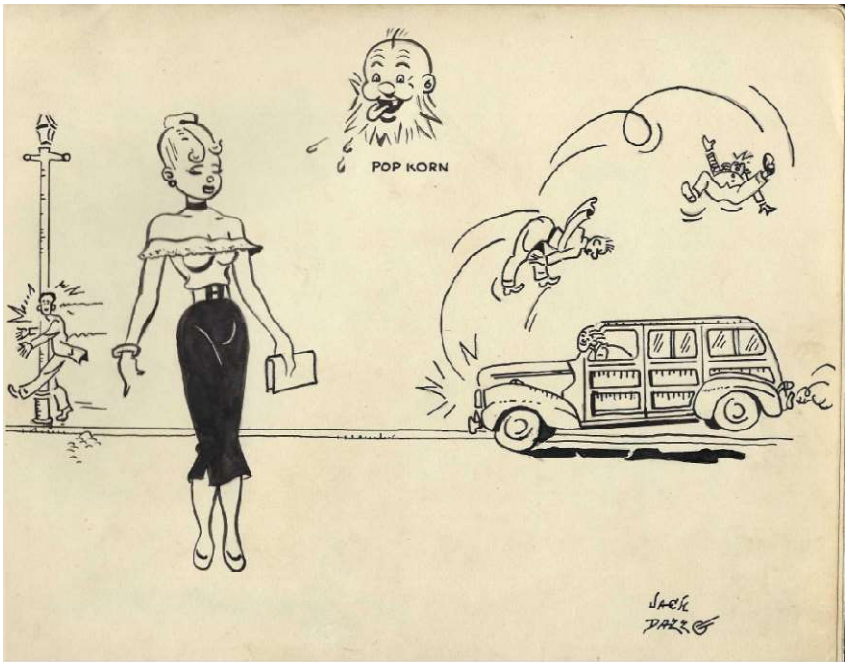
Thank you for your interest in this organization.

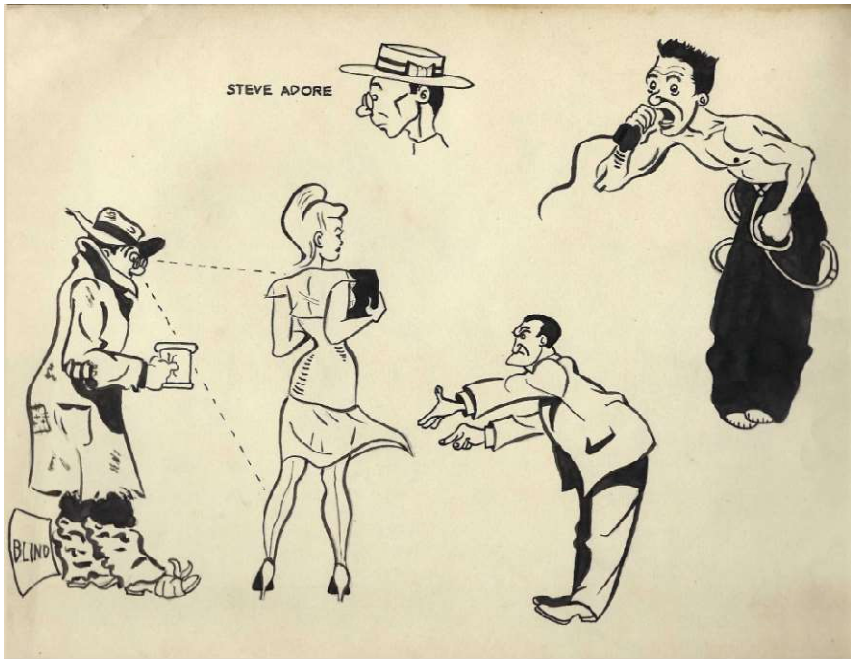
Very truly yours,

WALT DISNEY PRODUCTIONS

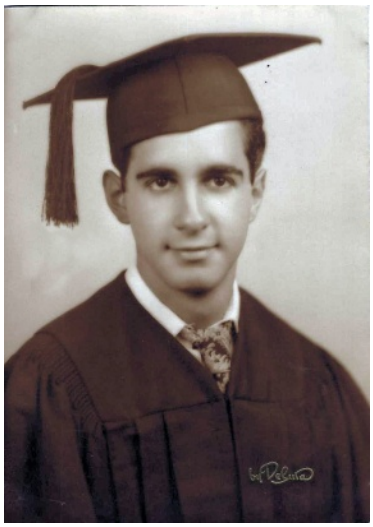
Jack Dunham
Personnel Director

Jack's parents wouldn't let him move to California, so he graduated school in New York and did three years at Pratt Institute. His drawing style was well developed by then.


POP KORN
JACK DAZZ

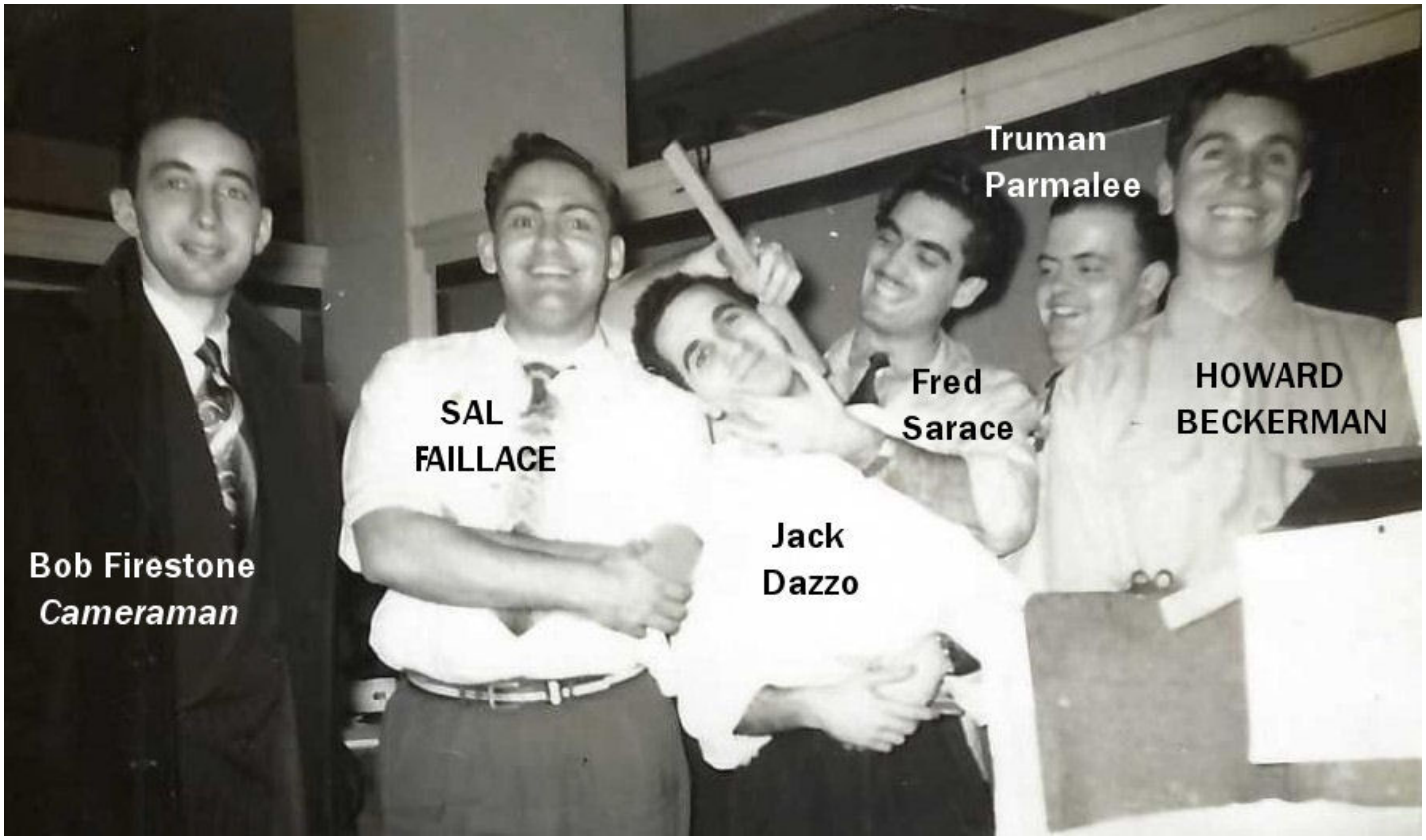

STEVE ADORE
BLIND

SAL VAGE
D. TEST
JACK DAZZ

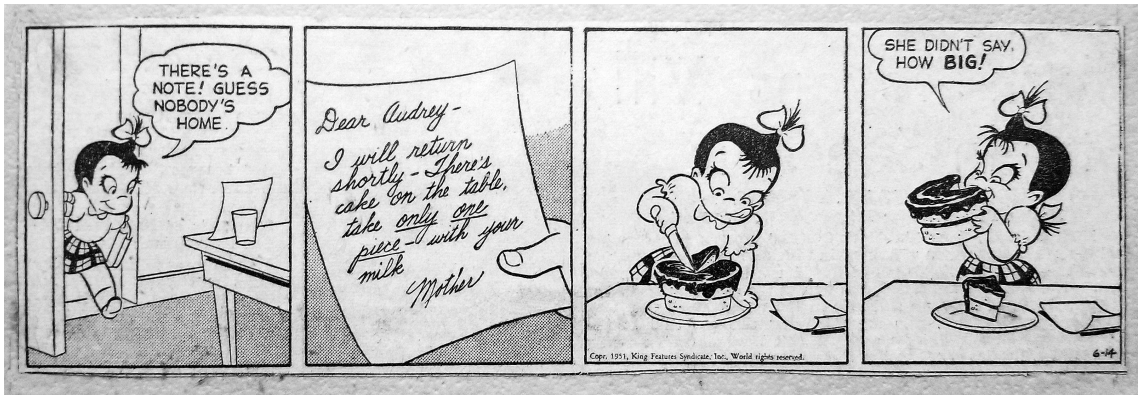


Showing his portfolio to dozens of art directors brought no jobs. After several months his aunt told Jack about her friend who worked in animation. Jack Dazzo started at Famous Studios as an opaquer on September 18, 1950.

Six months later he was an inbetweener, which he described as 'an assistant to an assistant animator'. Slinging a pencil in a room full of other young talent, Jack Dazzo pitched in on POPEYE, CASPER, and LITTLE AUDREY cartoons for theaters.

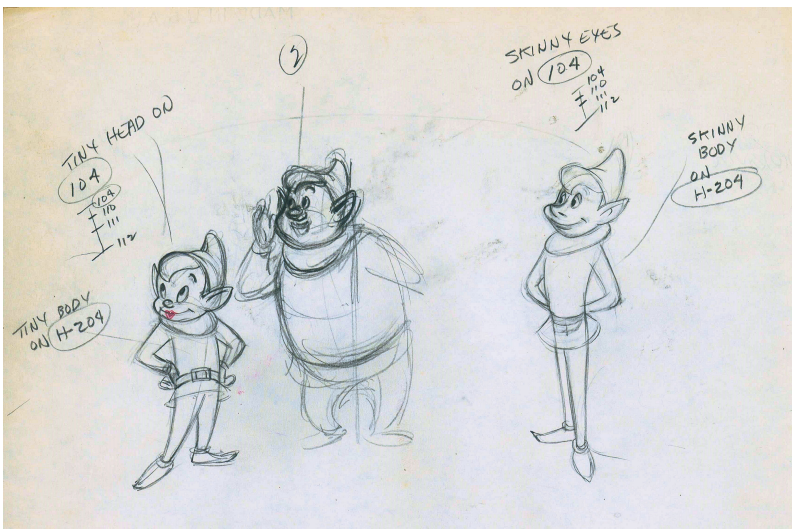


Famous Studios ran a LITTLE AUDREY strip in newspapers. Artists working there were encouraged to submit strips for consideration. Dazzo sold several of them at fifty dollars a pop.

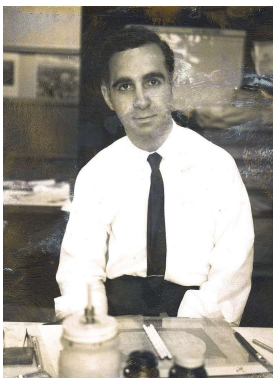


In 1952 Jack married his friend's cousin Terry. He'd entered the animation business at a time of upheaval. The double punch of television and changes in theater regulations would put a damper on theatrical cartoons, calling into question how long could a studio that large continue. The number of jobs was about to narrow drastically. Only the most talented would survive. Television commercials made by smaller studios were the future.

Shamus Culhane's expert eye for talent espied Jack Dazzo in 1953 and took him on as an inbetweener. Four months later Jack got bumped up to Assistant Animator. Guys from Madison Avenue advertising agencies were now involved in the mix. Unavoidable interlopers. Corporate Cash Cows Considered Culhane's Fare Quality! Jack worked on high profile television ads for major companies: Lipton Tea; Halo Shampoo; Campbell Soups; Borden Milk; Chesterfield Cigarettes; and the celebrated Mae West parody for Muriel Cigars.

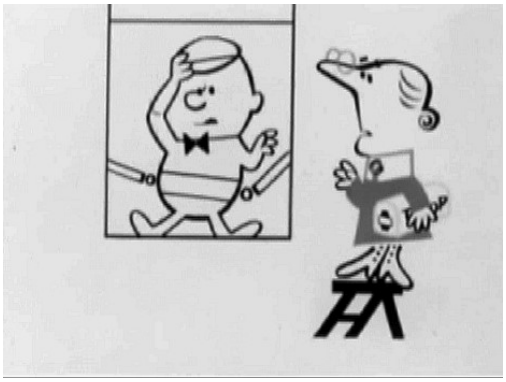


Dazzo remained with Culhane for four years. Temporary layoffs forced him to freelance. Dazzo spent four months of 1956 wiih K&W Film Service at 1657 Broadway. While at Shamus Culhane Productions, Jack Dazzo worked on numerous commercials for Ajax Cleanser featuring singing elves. These ran on The Colgate Comedy Hour hosted by Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis.

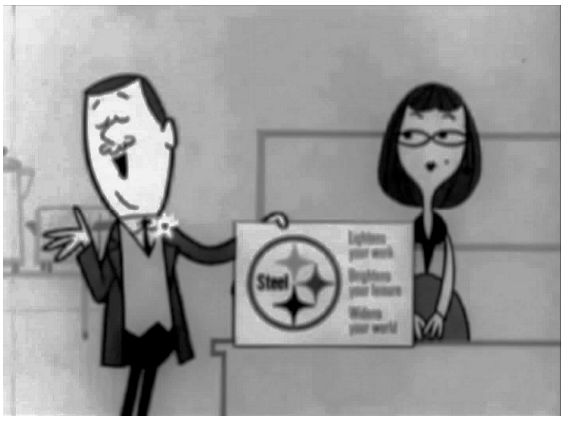


By 1957 Jack had two young daughters, a new house on Staten Island, and a promotion to Apprentice Animator. When Shamus Culhane made the live-action SHOWDOWN AT ULCER GULCH sales film for the Saturday Evening Post, Gordon Whittier animated Ted Keye's single-panel character HAZEL for a short sequence, with Dazzo's assistance. Dolores Cannata handled art direction on the overall film.

Shamus Culhane Productions hemoraged money, spending as fast as it came in. About 1958 it seems Dazzo worked on a couple of Tip Top Bread spots at Gifford Animation. He was hired on staff at Transfilm, right next door to Famous Studios. By then Famous had become Paramount Cartoons, mired in the uninspired rut of an obsolete theatrical market. Next door, Transfilm made bold moves in the T V ads market, hiring away Gordon Whittier and Dolores Cannata as Shamus Culhane Productions collapsed.



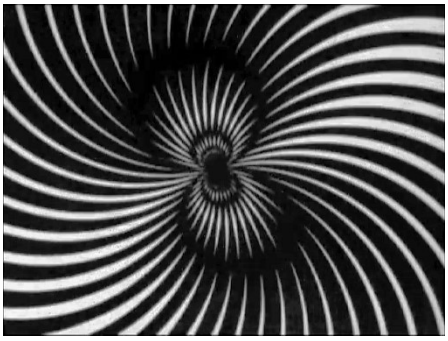
At Transfilm Dazzo worked on teleblurbs for U.S. Steel.

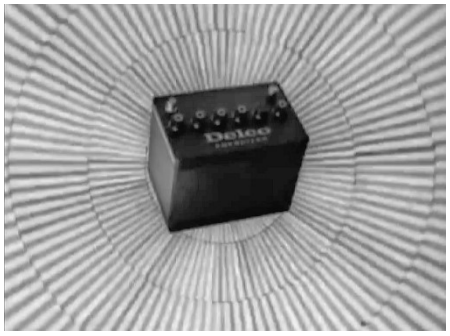


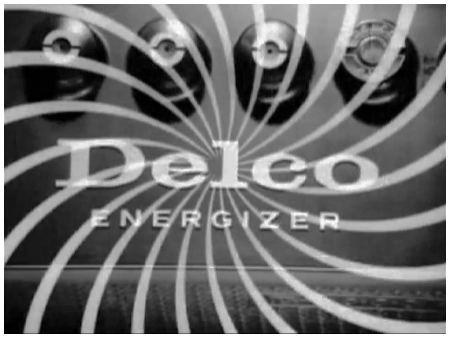
Bonded Gas:

Jack Dazzo helped make the Marx Toys mascot cavort:

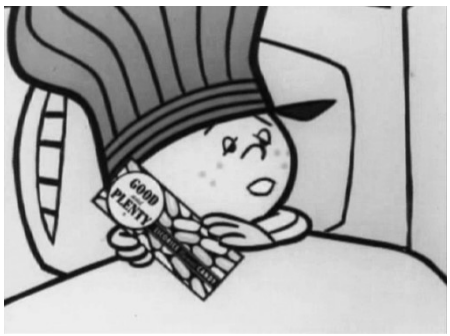
In turn, Transfilm was purchased by the Ohio-based Buckeye Corporation, along with Wylde Studios and Caravel Pictures. And so, animation was done at Transfilm-Wylde and Jack Dazzo began directing teleblurbs there. No longer a mere pencil-jockey, Jack's skill-set multiplied as he worked with actors, ad men, editors, camera people, and optical printers.

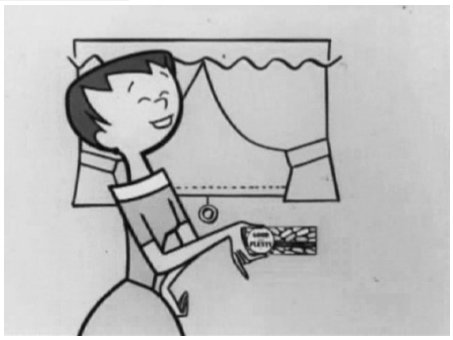


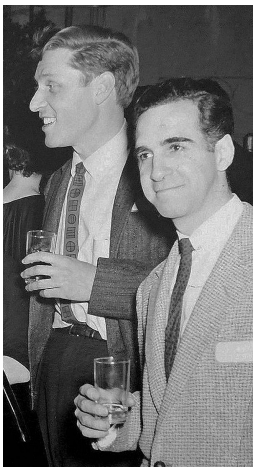




Teleblurbs were recognized as an artform in 1960 when the American Radio and TV Commercials Festival handed out the first Clio Awards for 'innovation and creative excellence in advertising, design, and communication'. Suddenly Jack Dazzo's job became very fashionable. Advertising agencies stepped-up their game, bringing animators more memorable material to work with.



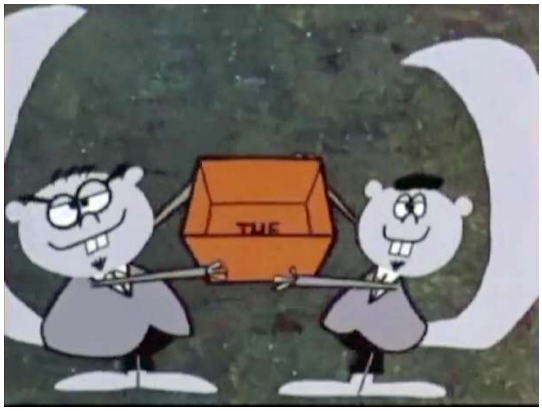




In a single decade Jack Dazzo had fast-tracked from lowly opaquer for the dying theatrical cartoon market to head-honcho in the expanding field of television commercials, animation division. He and producer Marvin Friedman attended the best cocktail parties, power-lunched with corporate executives, and hob-nobbed with ad agency big-wigs. Dazzo exemplified the American Dream.

Color television added new levels to what they could accomplish.

When Transfilm-Wylde created a show called THE NUTTY SQUIRRELS PRESENT Jack Dazzo personally animated the opening sequence.



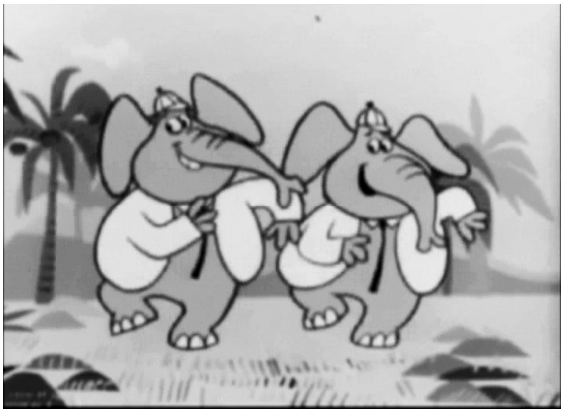
And then a bump in the road when the Buckeye Corporation got banned from the Stock Exchange around 1961. Transfilm-Wylde ceased to exist. The gravy train came to an abrupt halt. At 35 years old Jack Dazzo was out there looking for work. Top studios brought him in on a steady basis. Dazzo turned out pages at Elektra, first under supervisor Pablo Ferro, then under Phil Kimmelman.

Ray Favata used Dazzo at Gryphon Productions whenever he could. Some of those old Charmin Toilet Tissue ads were Dazzo's. Jack Zander had him in at Pelican Films. Dazzo sometimes inhabited a seat among old masters at Bill Sturm Studios. In 1964 he freelanced for Byron Rabbitt Productions. It was Elektra that snatched Dazzo up in early 1965. Phil Kimmelman prepared to move on and groomed Dazzo for the supervisor's position. During April 1965 Jack Dazzo became the head of Elektra Films' animation department with Jordan Caldwell as his producer. They set to work:

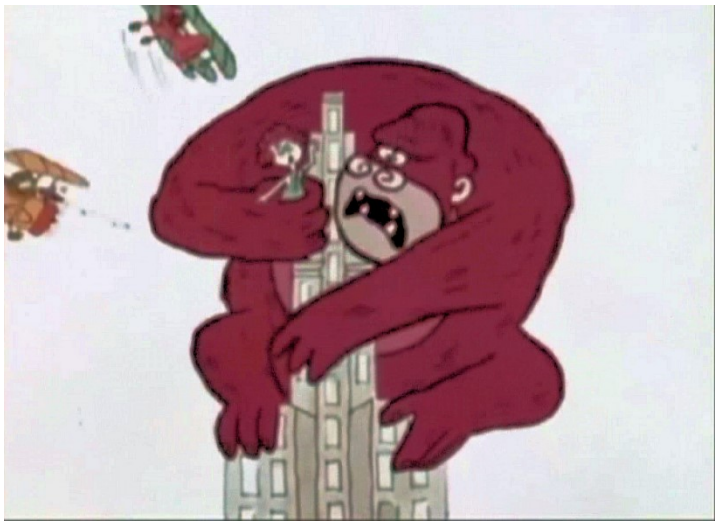
3M Scotch Tape

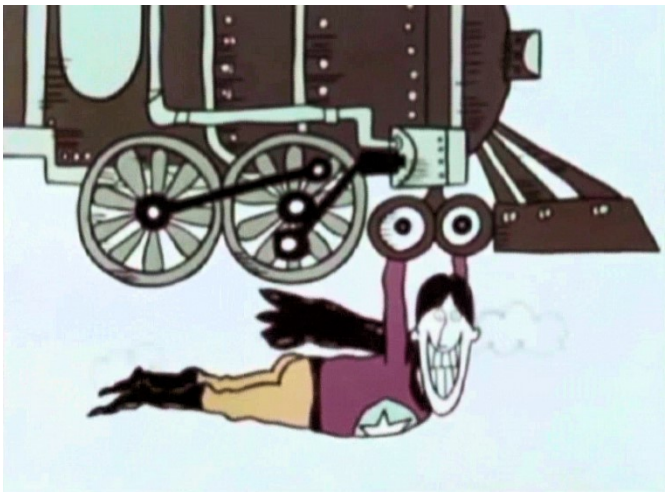
Morton Salt

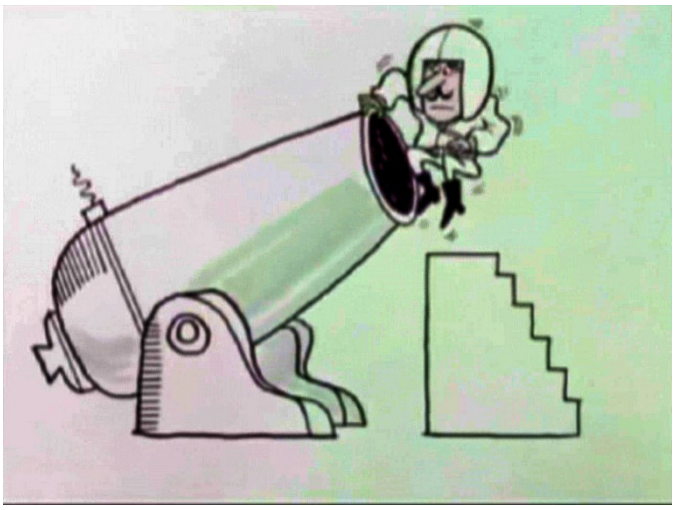
Post Crispy Critters

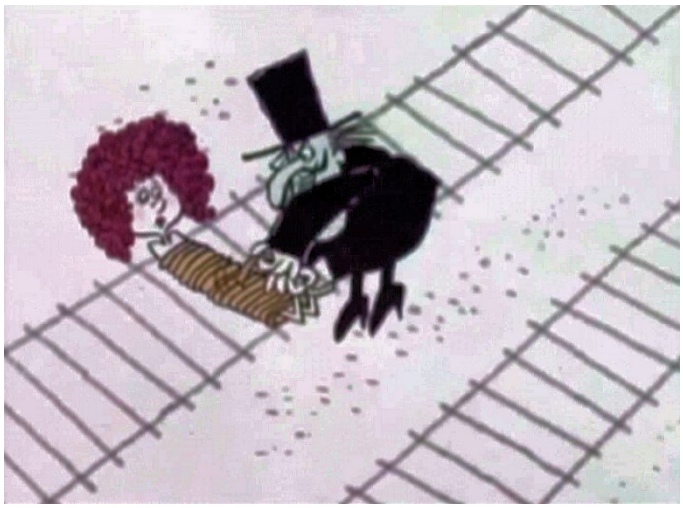


Now, I was six years old at this point, and very aware of animation on television. I'd read an article or something, and understood the fundamentals of what it entailed. I had no idea Jack Dazzo existed, but I watched his work with great attention. How nice to be bombarded with iconic summer fun courtesy of Dairy Queen.









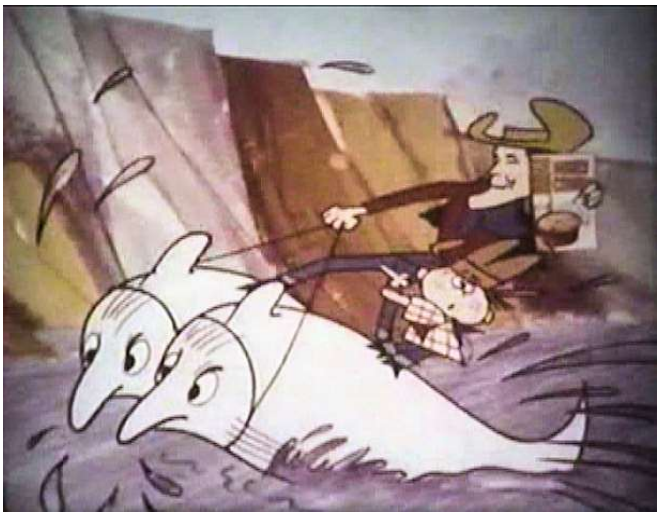
Paramount Cartoons, where Dazzo started when it was Famous Studios, closed during 1966. At Elektra, Dazzo continued working closely with designers to bring interesting things to teleblurbs.

PEPTO-BISMOL

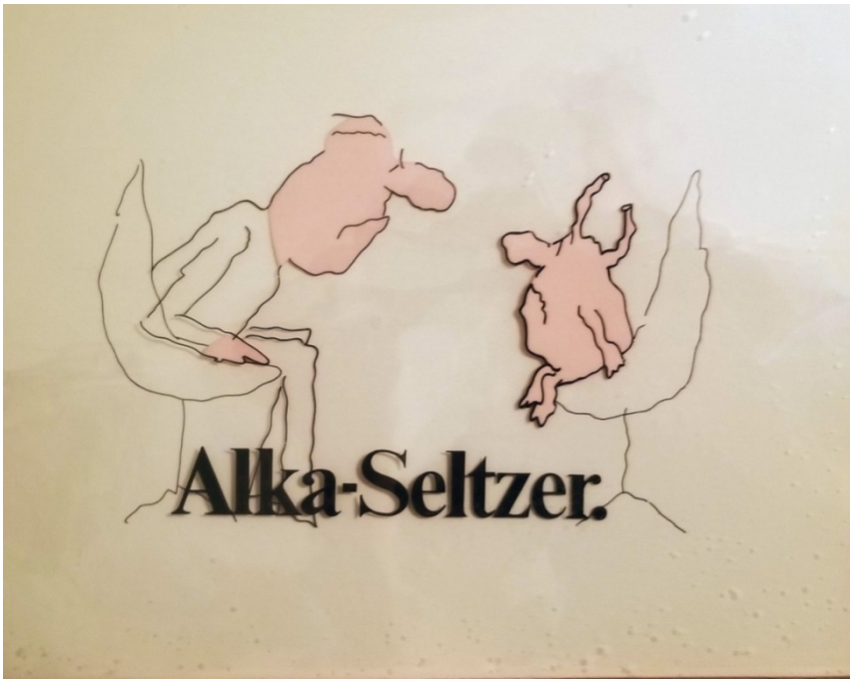
EATON SECURITY

Alice in Eatonland, done for the security firm that also manufactured Yale Locks, was part of a trend using subliminal sexual imagery. To be honest, Shamus Culhane's sexy cigar had broken through that wall fifteen years earlier, but it often takes the culture vultures a while to see what's under their noses.

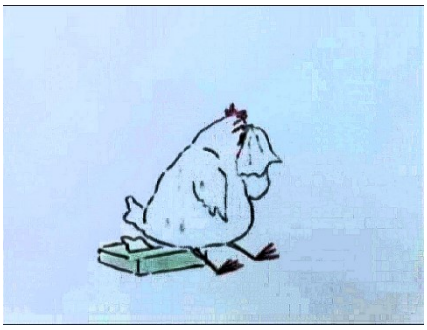
While these more adult spots aired in prime-time, an entirely different market had to be considered for Saturday mornings. During that era of poorly done limited-animation overwhelming television fare, Dazzo and other teleblurb directors kept things moving. Eleektra revived the Honeycomb Kid.



Elektra was on fire, charging big money, and paying big salaries. A resonant teleblurb could start a catchphrase craze, or give people something to talk about around the water-cooler. 1967 saw 'Talking Stomach', in which a man does a therapy session with his stomach.



I was eight years old when I watched that squiggly-lined man argue with his stomach. What whimsy. Those sublime R. O. Blechman designs brought to life by a skilled animator like Jack Dazzo. George Cannata Jr. acted as Creative Director on the project, which won a Clio Award from the advertising community, and a Certificate of Merit from the Art Directors' Club of New York. Magazine articles were written about *Talking Stomach*.



Animators were often compelled to depict unusual scenarios. One day it fell to Jack Dazzo to make a chicken cry. Ad agency Young & Rubicam wanted to high-light how Armour Bacon shrank less by making the chicken think her eggs were getting smaller. I don't know how Dazzo felt about making a chicken cry. It was business, nothing personal.

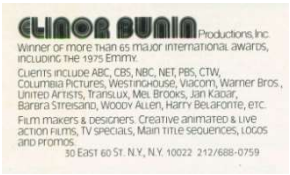
The good news is that the spot went over well enough for a series of them to be made, and the chicken was able to find professional help for her depression. Jack had a maxim: "Believable action from an un-real idea".

ELEKTRA DIVERSIFIES DAZZO

Jack Dazzo's responsibilities as animation director for Elektra Film Productions have been expanded, in keeping with the film firm's recent expansion in the industry, it was announced by Karl Fischer, creative director of animation at Elektra. Dazzo's duties now include direction of all animation for TV and theatrical trailers, show openings, logos and special effects for live-action films produced at Elektra. Additionally, Dazzo will coordinate with both Elektra's designers and "outside" artists like Blechman, Chwast, Steig and others whose work Elektra animates.

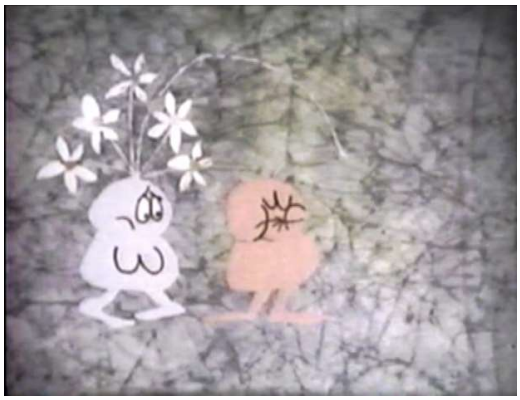
"Once a trend is set in TV commercials, production companies become stuck with it," said Dazzo. "Elektra has been fortunate in attracting clients and agencies looking for new looks—but still a great deal of my work has been limited by the needs of the medium. This expansion will give me the opportunity to move in new directions. And movement," Dazzo added, "is what animation is all about!"

On May 30, 1969 *BACK STAGE* ran an article about Jack's growing importance at Elektra. He definitely had a sweetheart deal. Elektra allowed him to do side work. Jack often moon-lighted beside Arnie Levin over at Pablo Ferro Productions. When Levin started *Phos-Cine* he'd call on Dazzo frequently.

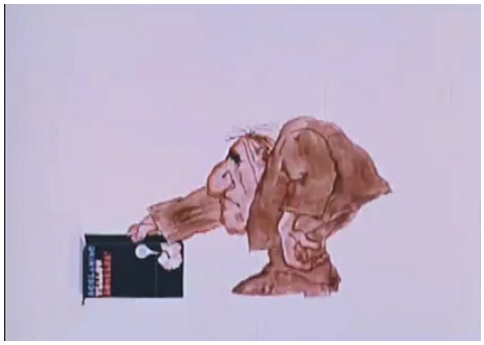


Jack Dazzo also had an arrangement with producer Elinor Bunin. She tapped into the Federal Arts money being thrown towards PBS and their new Children's Television Workshop. Elektra was fine with all that. Jack Dazzo kept his department functioning smoothly. Elektra indulged his desire to make the artsy prestige film

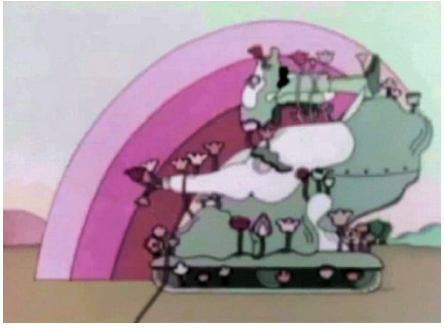
APPLE



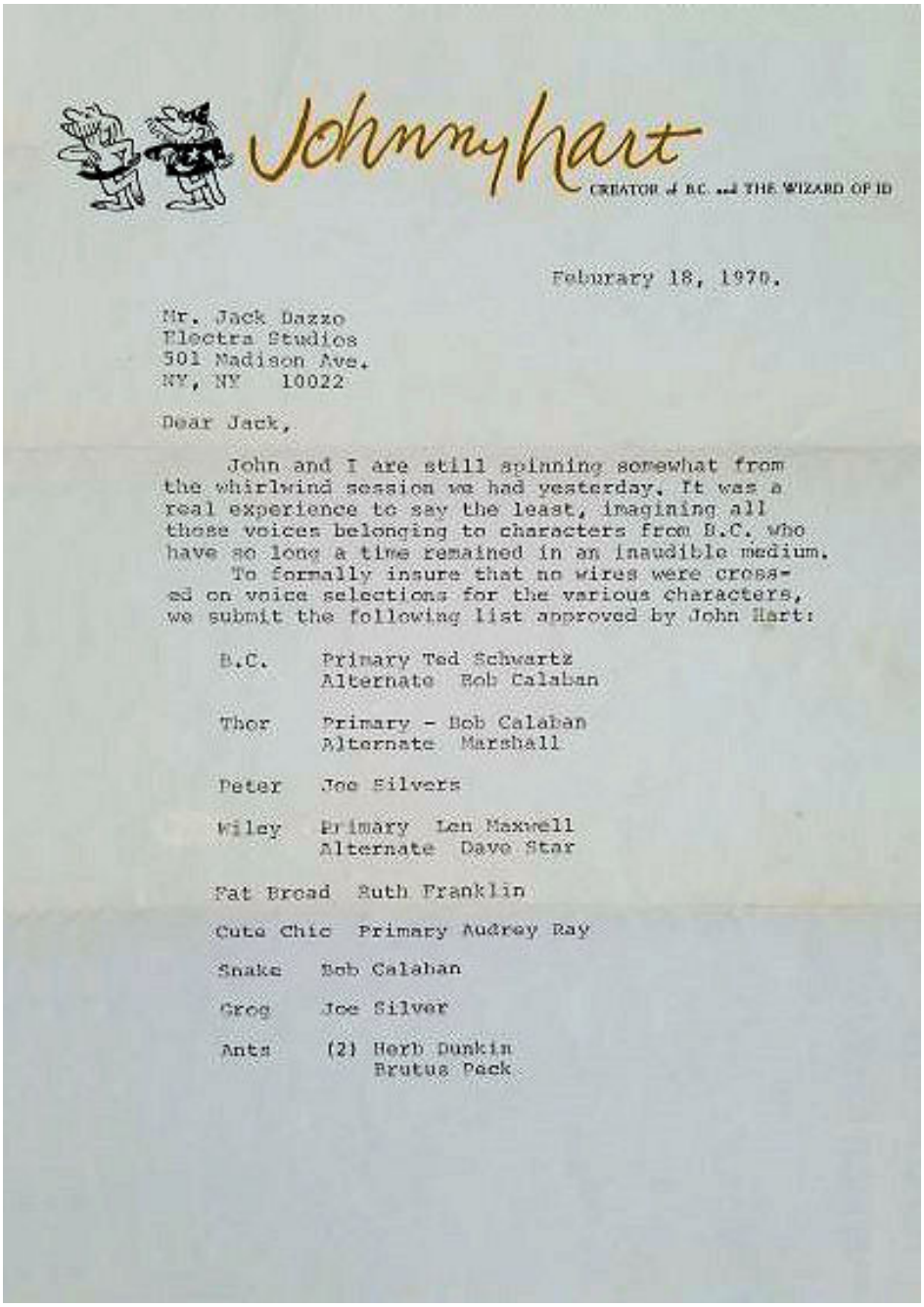
As the post-war baby boomers turned 21, Madison Avenue focused marketing to the younger crowd. Then it became a race between ad agencies to see who could come up with the most far-out ideas. Elektra was more than prepared to meet this challenge. Their Screaming Yellow Zonkers spots went for broke. That product's "Metamorphosis" ad in 1970 brought Elektra more rave reviews, and a certificate from the international animation society ASIFA.



Everything was all Hippy-Dippy!



Newspaper cartoonist Johnny Hart licensed out his B.C. characters, and Dazzo adapted them into animation for Marathon Oil ads.



Johnny Hart

CREATOR of B.C. and THE WIZARD OF ID

February 18, 1970.

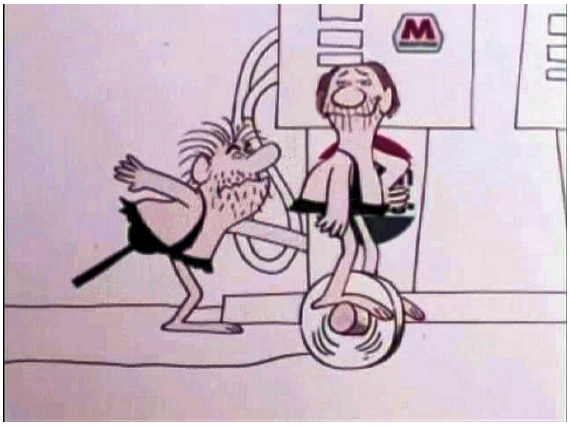
Mr. Jack Dazzo
Electra Studios
501 Madison Ave.
NY, NY 10022

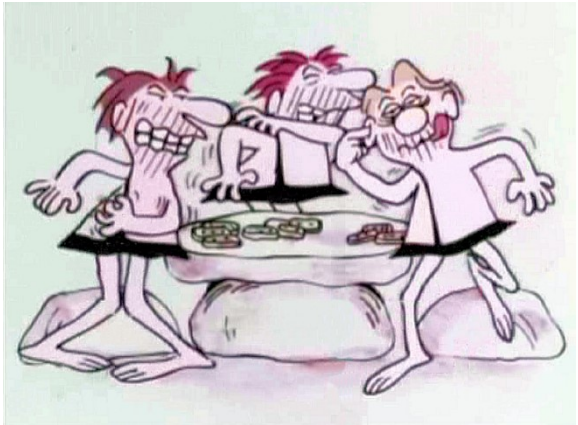
Dear Jack,

John and I are still spinning somewhat from the whirlwind session we had yesterday. It was a real experience to say the least, imagining all those voices belonging to characters from B.C. who have so long a time remained in an inaudible medium.

To formally insure that no wires were crossed on voice selections for the various characters, we submit the following list approved by John Hart:

B.C.	Primary Ted Schwartz Alternate Bob Calahan
Thor	Primary - Bob Calahan Alternate Marshall
Peter	Joe Silvers
Wiley	Primary Len Maxwell Alternate Dave Star
Fat Broad	Ruth Franklin
Cute Chic	Primary Audrey Ray
Snake	Bob Calahan
Grog	Joe Silver
Ants	(2) Herb Dunkin Brutus Pack





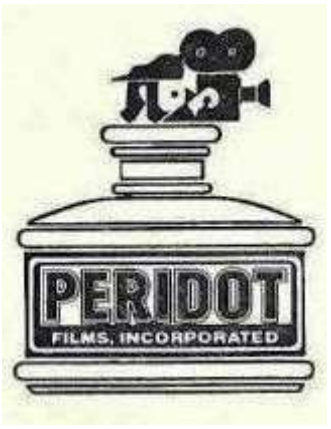
MPO Raids Production Staff Of Elektra Films

MPO Videotronics blurbery has hired away a large segment of the creative and production staff of Elektra Film Productions. At MPO, the group, with a big reputation in animation, will work as a separate animation division.

Heading the group are Jordon Caldwell, formerly exec veepee in charge of all Elektra production; Jack Dazzo, Elektra's head animation director; and Burt Harris, a live-action director at Elektra who had previously been at MPO.

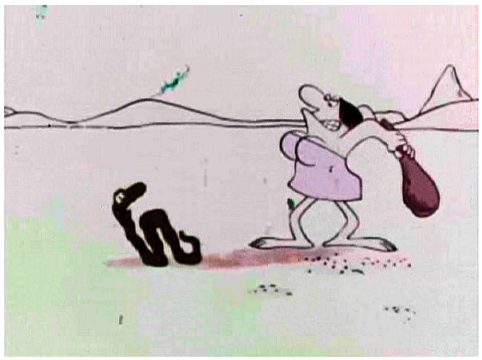
Also included in the move are Joe Canestro, editor, and several animators and artists.

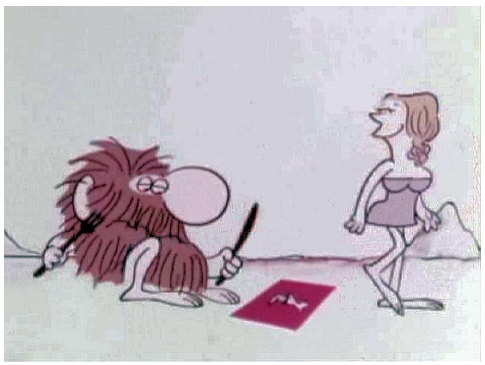
MPO-Videotronics poached Elektra Films' staff in 1971, hiring away a number of the best people. Jack Dazzo became Animation Director of a new subsidiary called Peridot Films, at 222 East 44th Street. Jordan Caldwell was his producer. They were given stock in the company. Jack's daughter Donna had just completed her sophomore year of high school, and he gave her a summer job as an opaquer. Donna was proud watching her father take meetings with ad men and corporate executives.

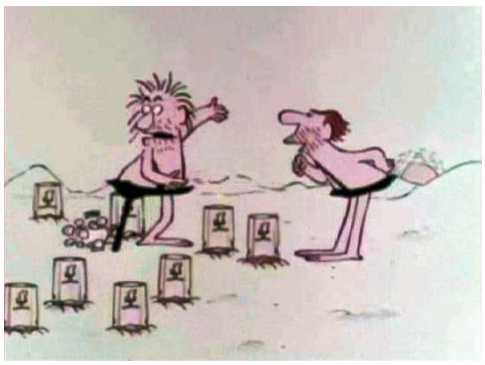


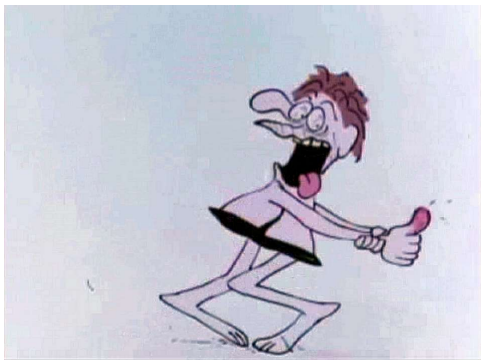
An AT&T campaign pitching the Yellow Pages – sort of a paper version of Google for local phone numbers - followed Dazzo and Caldwell to Peridot. Bugs Bunny was animated to interact with live-action celebrities.

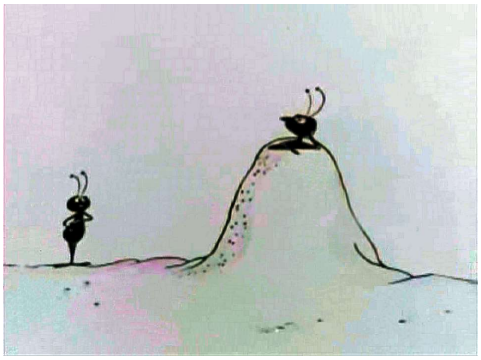
B.C. and Marathon Gas tagged along for a series of raucous adventures.

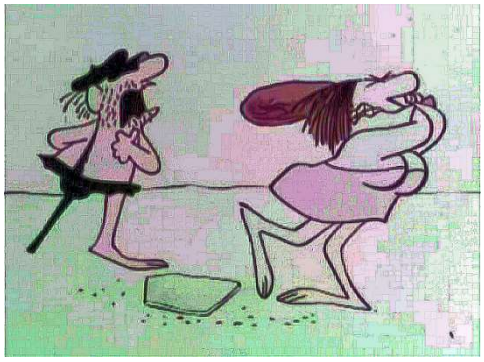


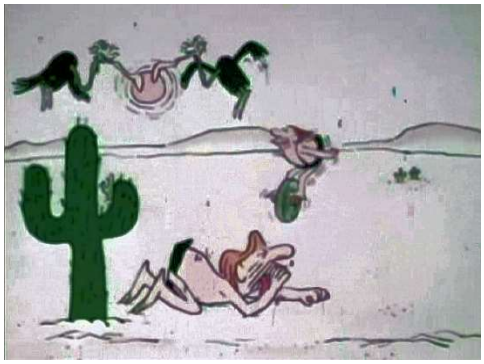


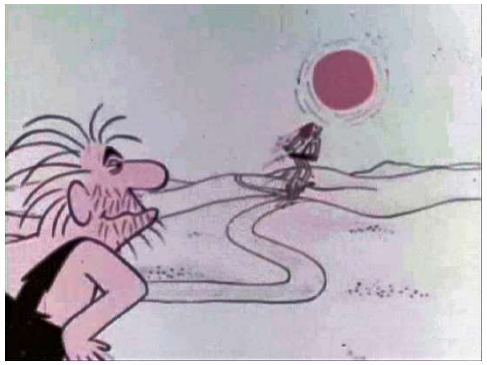


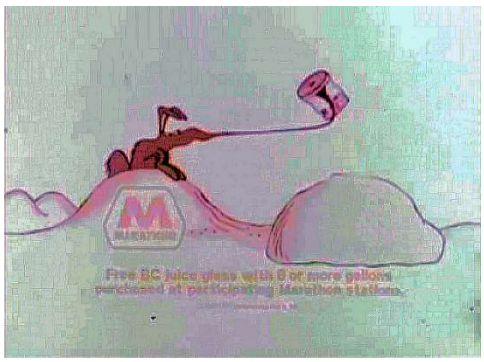










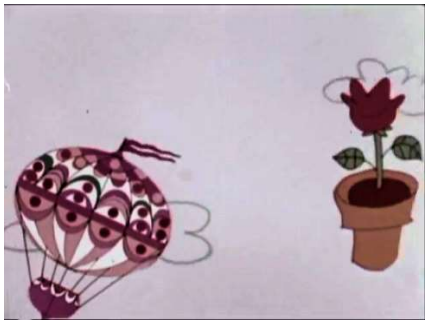


Elektra Films collapsed after so much talent jumped ship, but Peridot Films was a hot ticket, garnering favorable write-ups in the media. Things weren't all peaches-and-cream. Dazzo often called Phil Kimmelman to complain about Jordan Caldwell's manipulations. Dazzo still enjoyed autonomy so far as side-jobs were concerned.

The success PBS had with 'children's programming' set the ABC Network in motion to emulate the formula. Elinor Bunin hired Jack Dazzo to animate an opening sequence for

THE ABC AFTER SCHOOL SPECIAL

(1972)



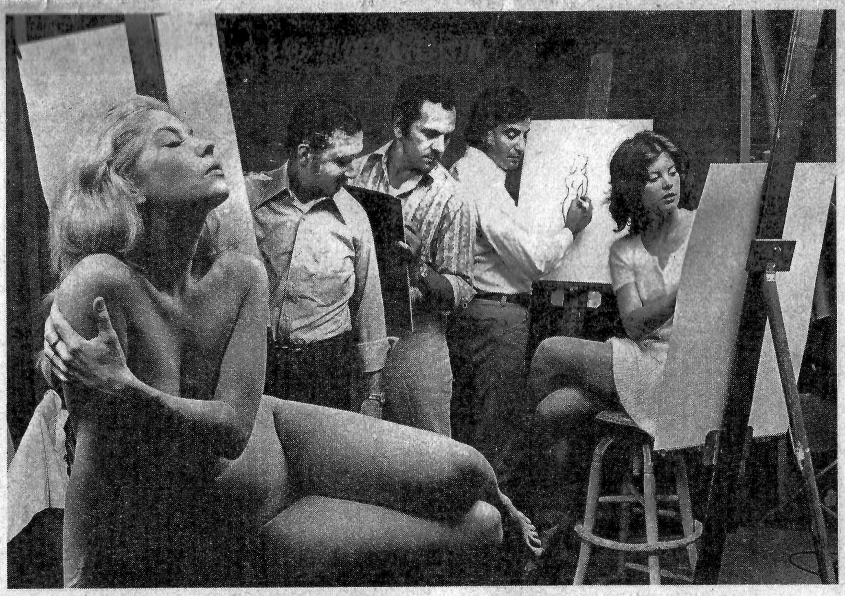


Photo by Fred Burrell

HUMAN NATURE IS FUNNY. When Elektra, a name synonymous with high-quality animation, disbanded two years ago, some producers and art directors looked elsewhere for "Elektra Quality" instead of looking to Elektra reorganized. For re-organized we are, as PERIDOT FILMS, INC ... The same creative personnel that made up Elektra now serves you as PERIDOT. Jordan Caldwell, Jack Dazzo, Burt Harris and others. Animation for the TV commercial industry.

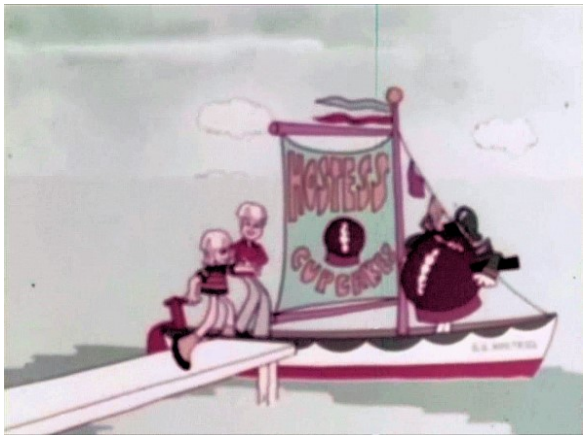
PERIDOT FILMS, INC. 222 EAST 44th Street 867-8200

When I was twelve, Peridot brought us W.C. Fritos. I picked up an imitation of the voice immediately.

"Hello, my little Chip-a-dees!".

Frito Lay put a FREE pencil-top eraser shaped like the character in Fritos Corn Chips six-packs. It was my prize possession for a while.

Fine work continued to be done despite any tensions, pleasing clients such as Hostess with a mind-altering journey to *Cupcake Island*. Allen Swift did the voice of Captain Cupcake.

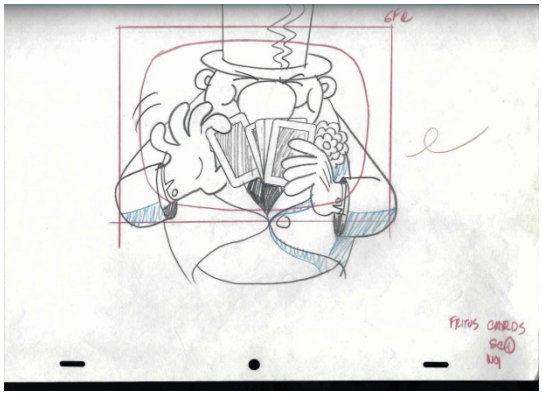


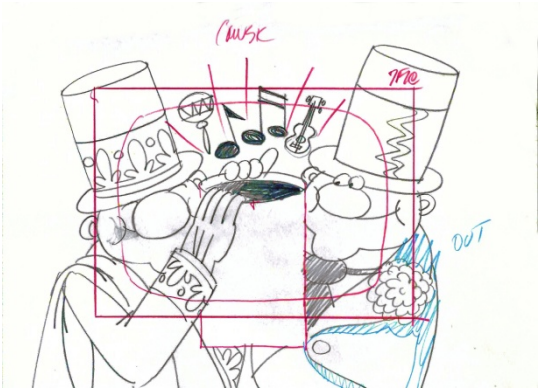
Peridot knocked it out of the park for Northeast Airlines

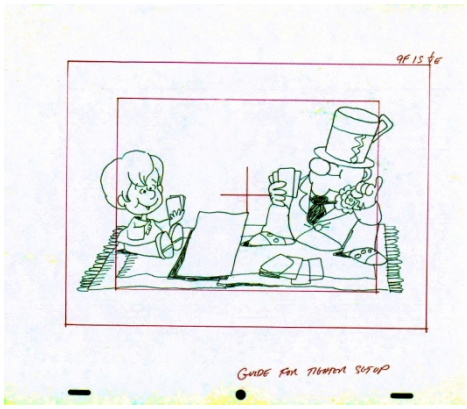
Commercials remained the bread-and-butter of small studios. Grist for the cultural *zeitgeist*. Fruit Pie the Magician came to be.

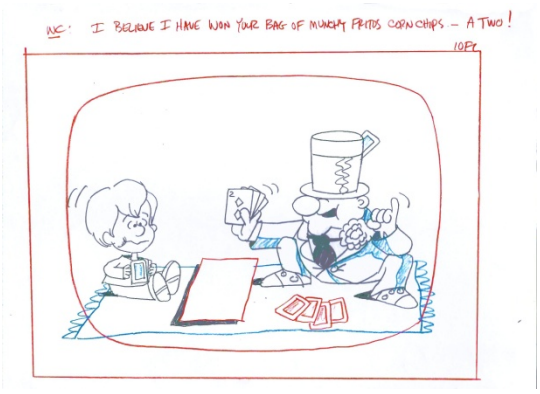
In April of 1974 MPO relocated the Peridot studio a couple of blocks to 305 East 44th Street. Then another big bump in the road. They finished moving all the equipment the day before their new address suffered an explosion that wrecked part of the building, destroying all of Peridot's animation equipment. MPO granted Jack Dazzo and Jordan Caldwell one month's severance. The two men had to pay corporate taxes on their stock. Jack was 48 years old and suddenly unemployed, with three growing daughters and two houses. He needed a place to work , , ,

Jackie Bisset and Violet Gelman, inkers by trade, knew Jack Dazzo from back in the Famous Studios days. Jackie and Violet owned an inking service called Cel Specialists at 18 East 41st Street. They arranged space in their shop for Jack to finish up three Frito's spots already in progress when the explosion happened. Tony Creazzo assisted on one.



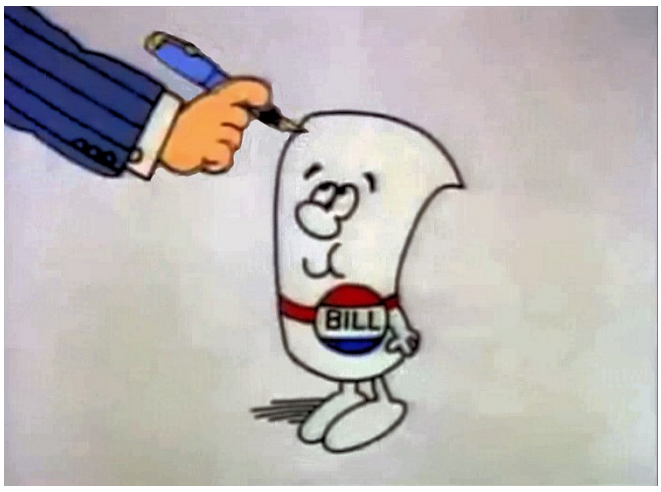




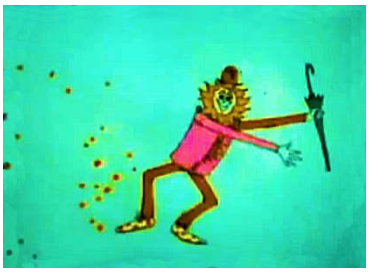


Jordan Caldwell and Jack had a razor commercial going with Gillette through Caldwell's agency Tempo Associates Ltd, featuring Fearless Fosdick. Jack's old partner from Transfilm-Wylde eked out his *niche* as a go-between for advertisers and animators. Marvin Friedman brought around some ad execs so Dazzo could bid on jobs. Nothing fancy: Lestoil cleanser; nasal drip for Dristan; hemorrhoid treatment; and one with a toilet bowl. Dazzo needed the work.

Phil Kimmelman & Associates was in the third season of *SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK* and called on Jack to do all 3 minutes of *I'M JUST A BILL*, with Bob Chiarito assisting on clean-up.



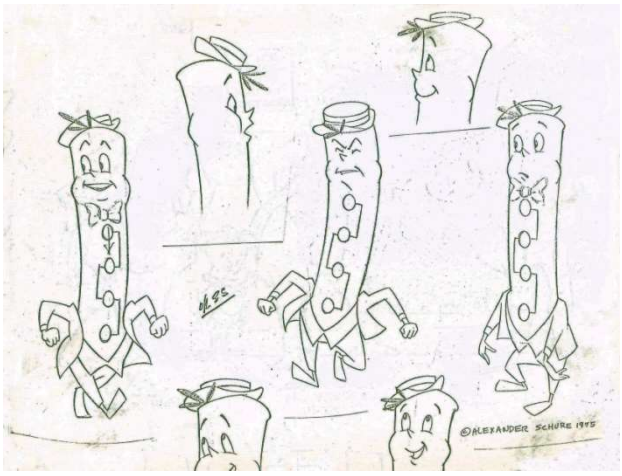
In summer 1974 Dazzo got involved with Elinor Bunin and Perpetual Motion Pictures about an opening sequence for *ABC Funshine Saturday*.



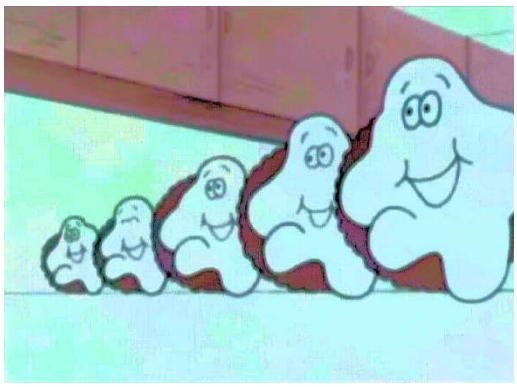
Dazzo joined the revived Shamus Culhane Productions for *NOAH'S ANIMALS*. Dazzo had Roger Meija as his assistant animator. Meija also assisted on a couple spots Jordan Caldwell set up for El San Juan Hotel in Puerto Rico.

Dazzo's next project in January 1975 was a *SESAME STREET* segment for Zepher Films at Park Ave and 34th Street. Zepher's owner John Renza produced low-end animation. It was a one-minute piece teaching how to say 'open' and 'closed' in Spanish. Dazzo did 55 feet and Doug Crane finished the last 35 feet.

Dazzo worked beside other top East Coast animators on the feature-length *TUBBY THE TUBA* for the New York Institute of Technology. Despite all the great talent involved, poor direction caused an abysmal rotten tomato.

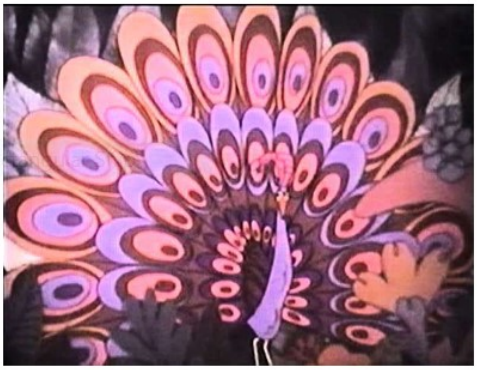


Phil Kimmelman got busy at PK&A using Dazzo on everything from **Hydrox Cookies** -



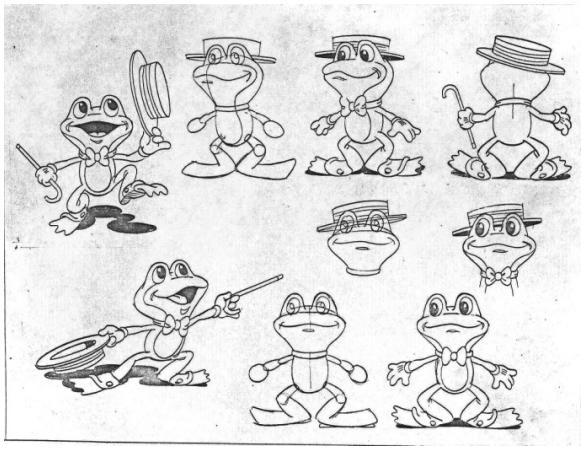
- to **Avis Car Rental**.

PK&A kept Dazzo busy. Designer Nick Gaetano emulated painter Henri Rosseau's flat, colorful style for a **Clairol Shampoo** ad. Jack Dazzo met the challenge.



. . . Easily switching gears for the playful **Six Flags Amusement Park** ads . . .

1976 proved a banner year for Jack Dazzo. His Renault commercial channeled singer Maurice Chevalier, though, viewed in a modern light it begets the question of political correctness in portraying a Frenchman as a frog.

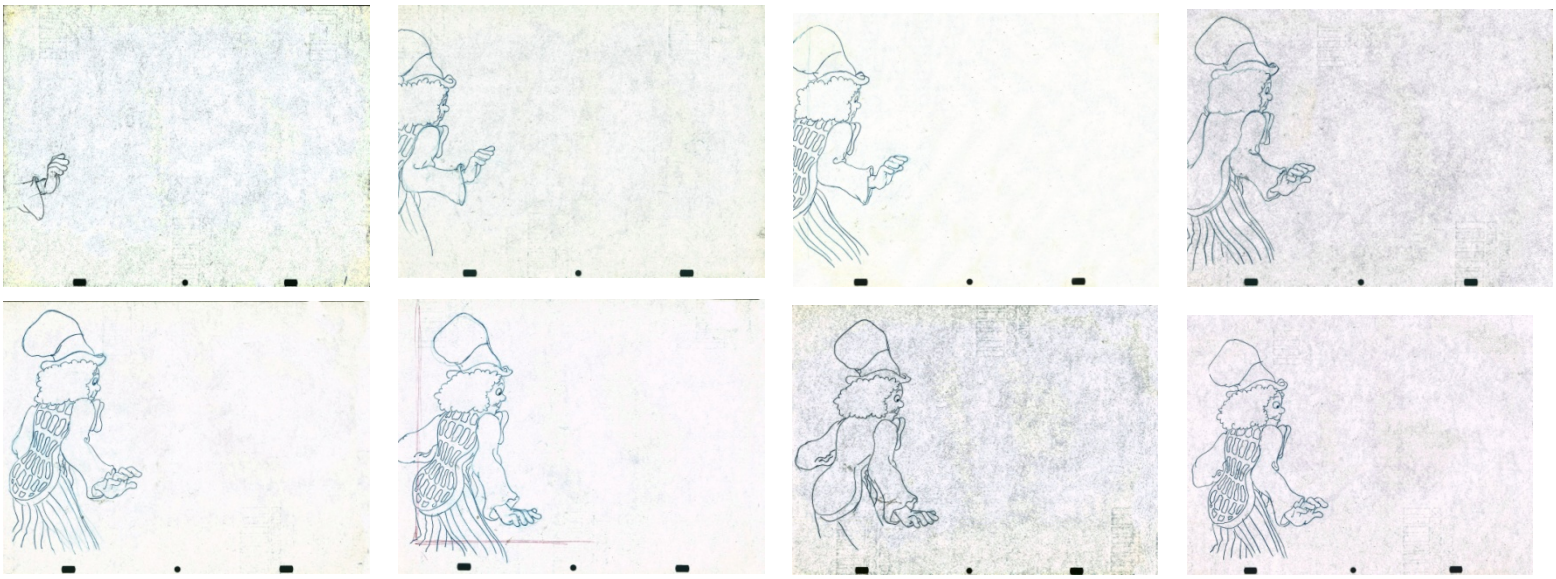


May 1976 – at PK&A, Jack Dazzo and Sal Faillace each did half of a 60 second spot for the U.S. Consumer Information Center. Bob and Bonney Chiarito at B.C. Film Works hired Dazzo to animate a caricature of Jimmy Carter on a political ad for Bob Udal.

July 1976 John Paratore hired Dazzo to do the "Baseball" segment for the PBS show *ELECTRIC COMPANY*. Paratore was a real low-budget operator. Dazzo took any work he could get just to pay the bills, even non-union gigs here and there. He hustled and hoped for his next big break.

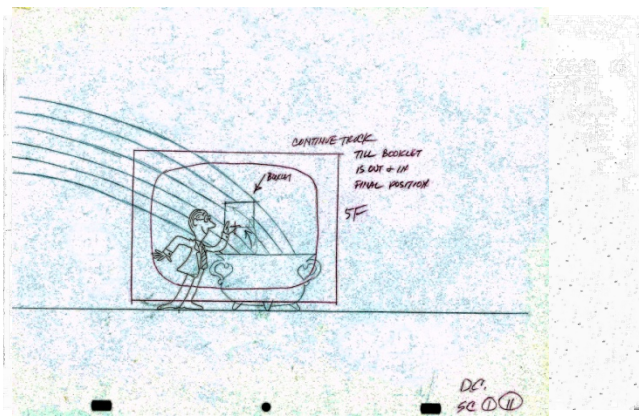
In August 1976 Dazzo did three Sugar Bear animatics at PK&A. Dazzo got hired to a staff position by Perpetual Motion Pictures on August 9th, remaining until October 20th when Perpetual slowed again. Dazzo returned to freelancing. When the Incredible Hulk smashed his way into a tree-house to pillage Honeycomb cereal at PK&A., Jack Dazzo was behind the pencil.

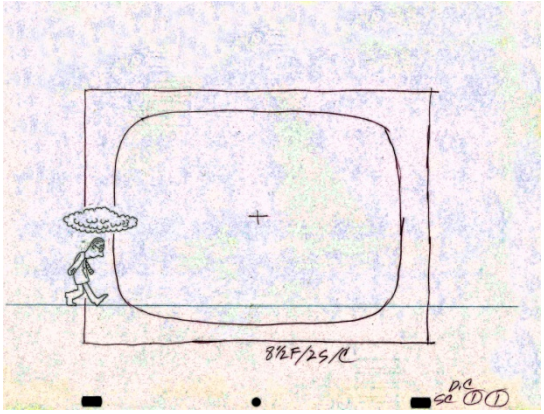
I was 16 and still had no idea who this animator might be. Jack Dazzo was 50 and gave life to the Nutter Butter Man, who was hip and stylish. Kids could relate. We asked no questions and sang the catchy jingle with our friends. Now I look at it and wonder if his body is supposed to be a cookie, or if he's wearing a plaid corset.



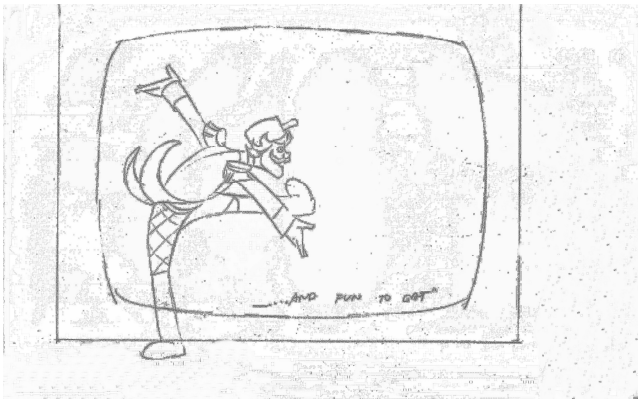
Based on Bill Peckmann's designs, Jack Dazzo set the magical M&Ms Candy Man dancing.

Dazzo finished-out 1976 at PK&A on a 'Pot Of Gold' spot for Diners Club.

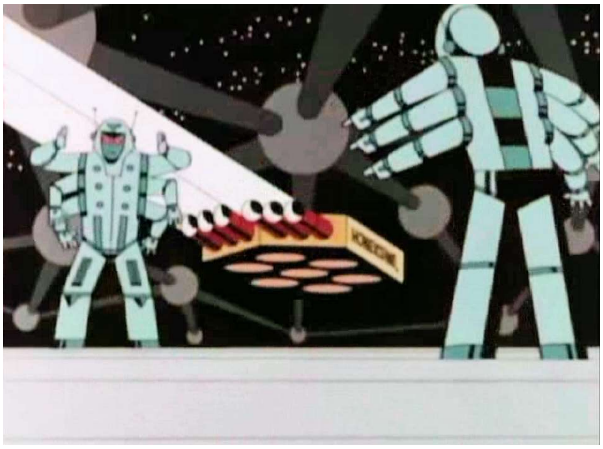




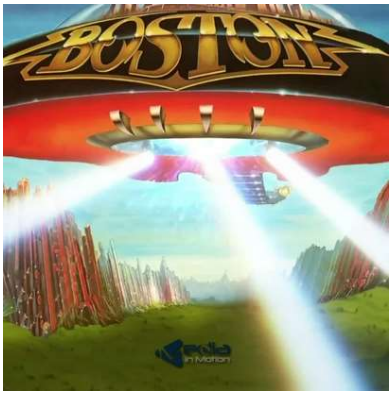
Jack Dazzo spent a bit of time on staff at PK&A in early 1977, but was freelancing there again by June, doing Soup Man for Lipton Ring-O-Noodles.



Thirty-minute animated specials were fashionable. Al Kouzel directed one for Valentine's Day using Bill Kean's FAMILY CIRCUS characters, with Dazzo on board, Mercury Productions shared an address with Perpetual Motion Pictures at 17 West 45th Street. Mercury had Dazzo create a 10 second spot about the World Series for WKAQ-TV. Then Kimmelman needed him for a series of 'Spaceship. Honeycomb' commercials.

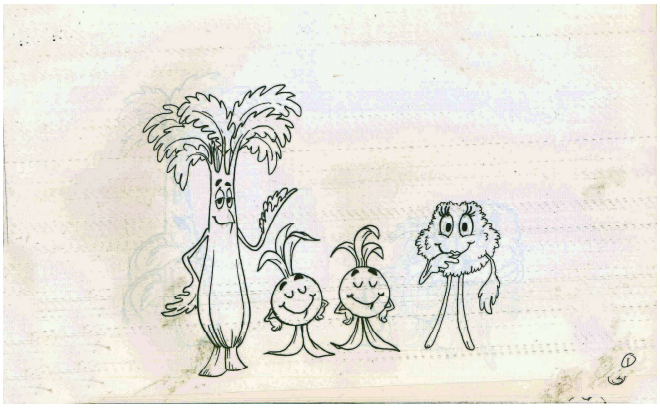


Those Honeycomb ads kept Jack going into 1978.



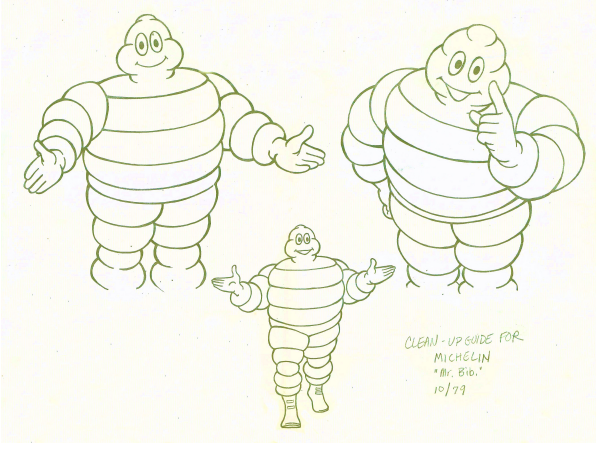
That July the band Boston released their second album. Dazzo's close friend Carlos Sanchez at I.F. Studios engaged him to animate sweeping search-lights on the album cover for TV promos. In October Dazzo started on *NO ROOM AT THE INN*, part of a Christmas special R. O. Blechman organized for PBS.

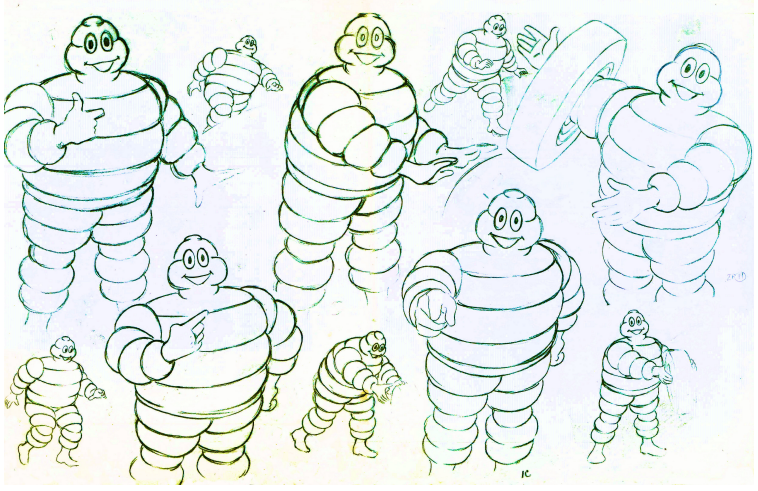
Dazzo ended 1978 with a Tuna Twist ad at Zander's Animation Parlour.

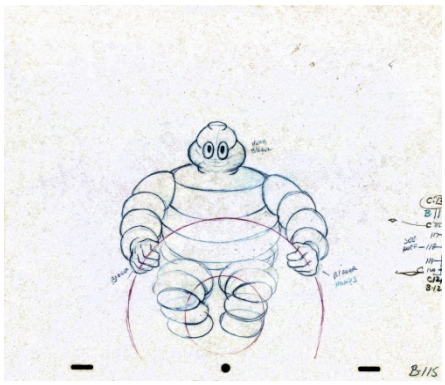
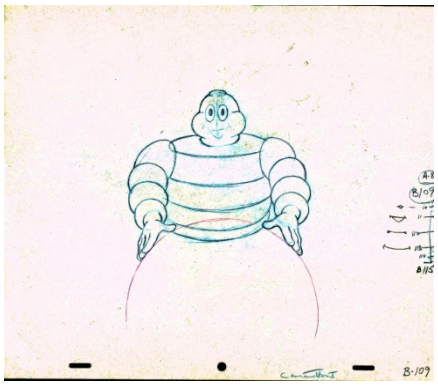
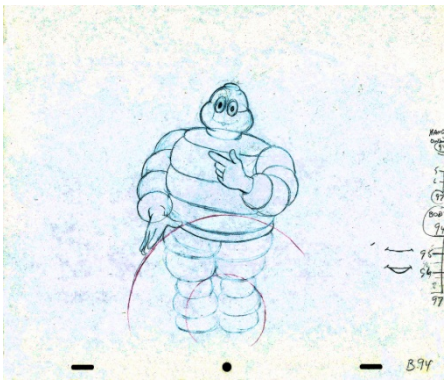
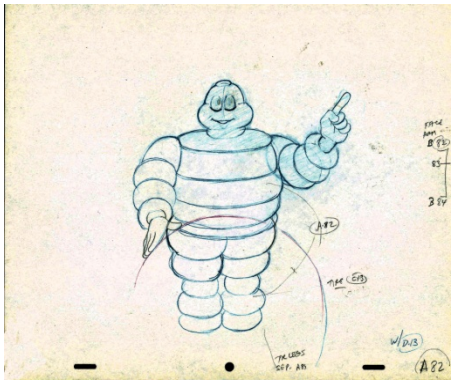
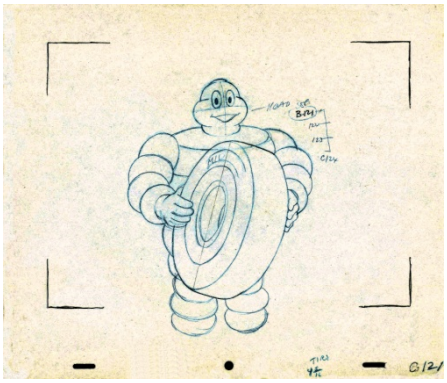
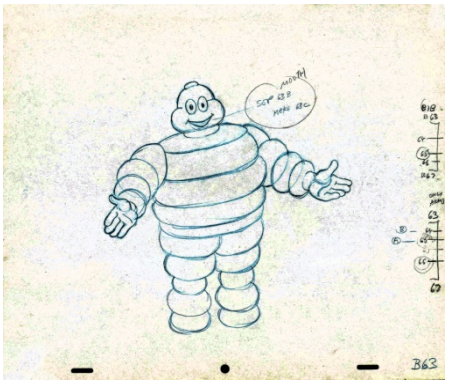


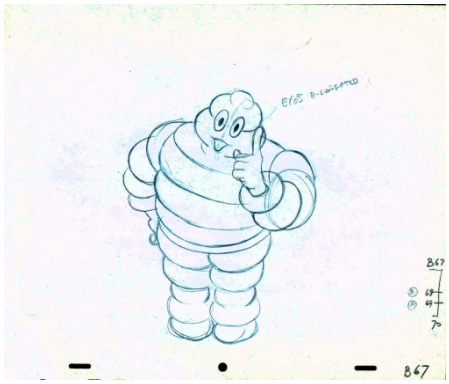
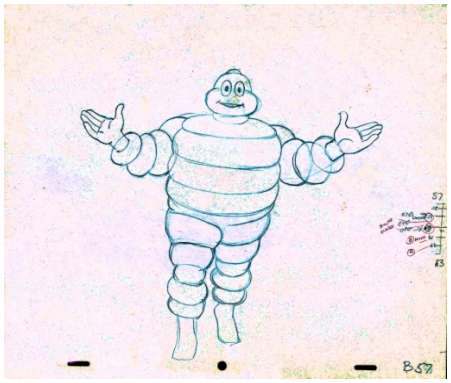
Perpetual Motion Pictures hired Jack Dazzo full time during July of 1979 for *BERENSTAIN BEARS' CHRISTMAS TREE*. The day Jack arrived, Candy Kugel recalls how young animators at Perpetual gawked at the guy whose studio had blown up. Jack was an easy going fellow who might have a beer with the younger animators, but never participated in macho posturing. Jack had no need to impress anyone in the place. For that reason some of them bad-mouthed him. I'd tell you who they were, but their names are forgotten. The younger crew who embraced Jack were the ones who impacted the industry. They made it to the history books.

At Perpetual, Jack found himself among old friends Gerry Dvorak and Lu Guarnier. It was decided Dazzo would animate the Mother Bear, with Mary Taracka as his main assistant. Work on the Berenstain Bears special ended in early October. Jack went right onto commercials for Johnson & Johnson, Hawaiian Punch. Xerox, Ajax, Pringles, Quaker, Buick, and Michelin Tires, which were usually produced in France.

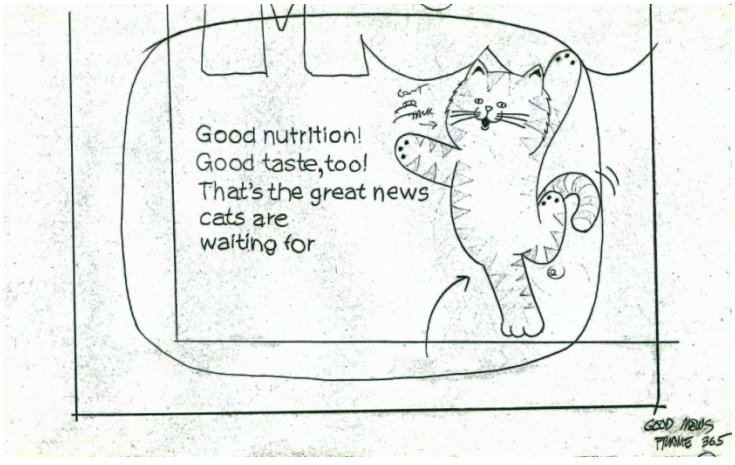


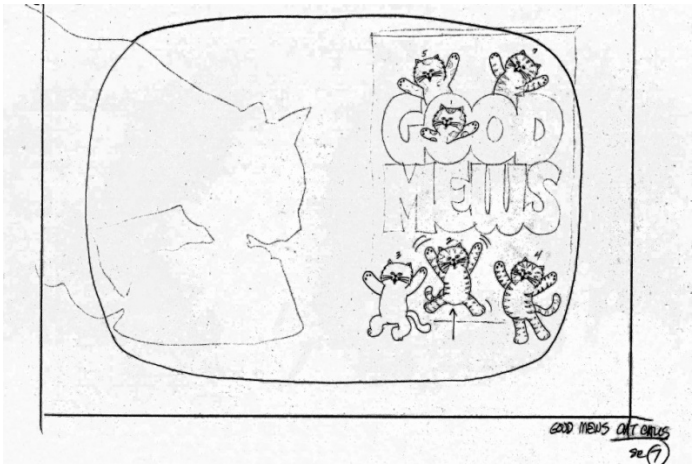


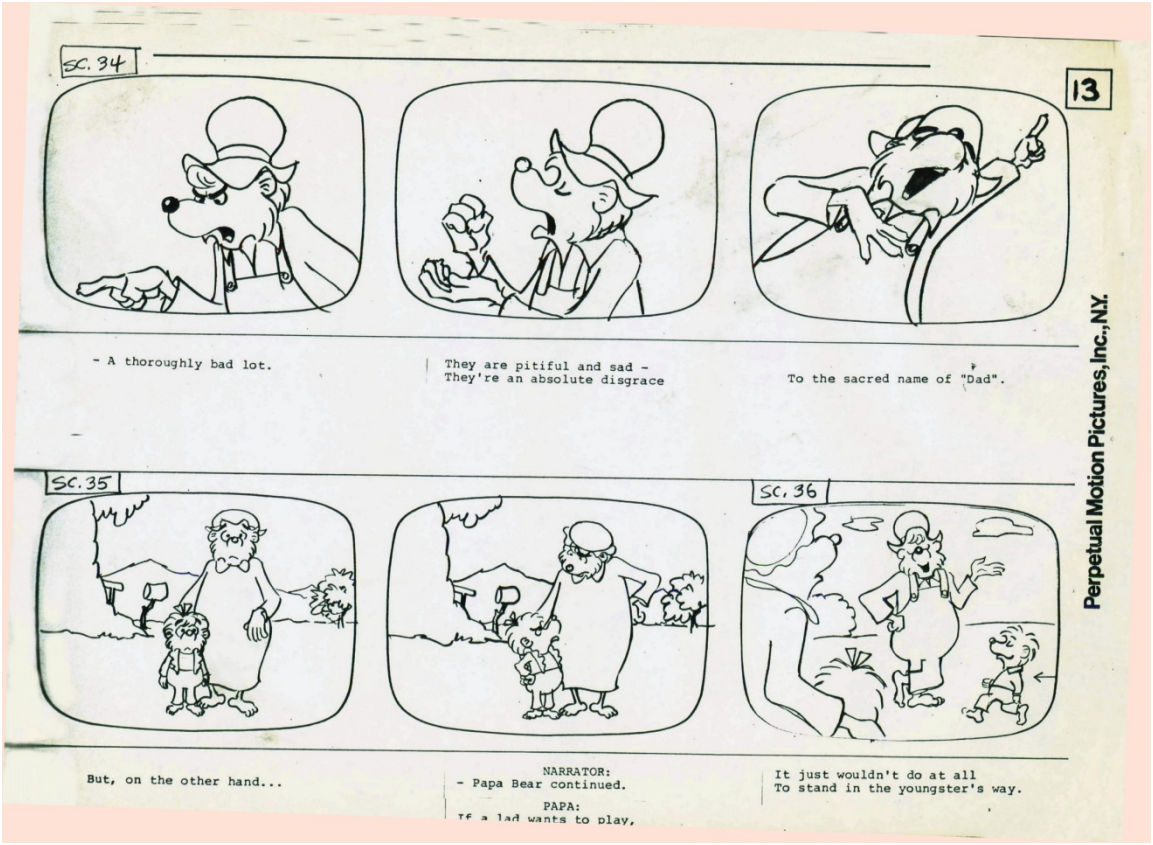



Working from home at night and on weekends, Dazzo did side-jobs, including a set of animatic sketches for Purina cat food's Meow Mix campaign through PK&A. He was not in the best of health at the time, but that never slowed his roll.

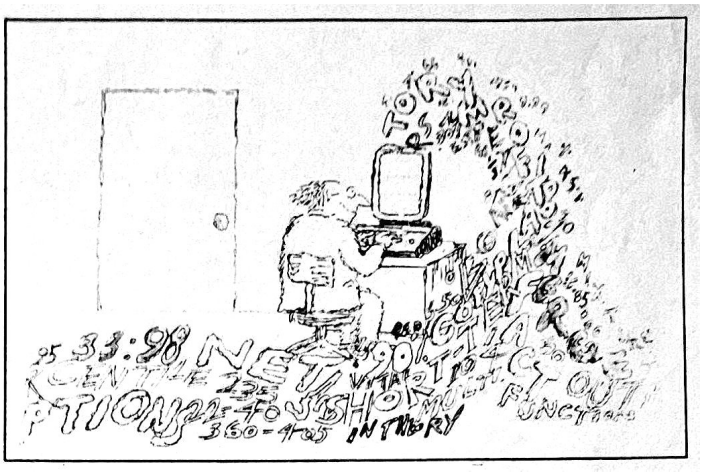




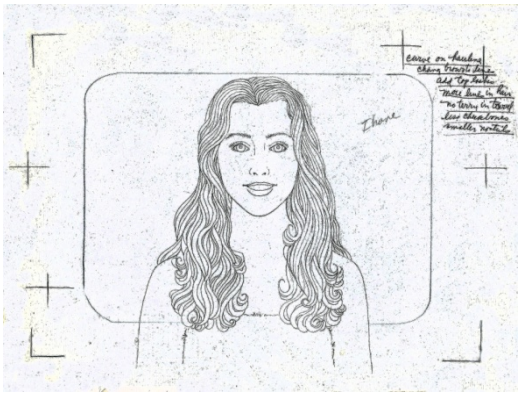
Perpetual slowed in April of 1980. causing a two month lay-off. In June Dazzo was called back to work on another Berenstain Bears special.



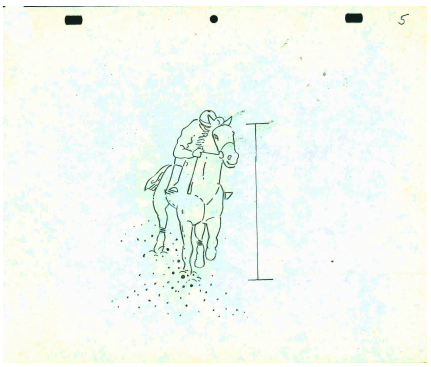
October 1980: A teleblurb for the Xerox 860 Information Processor, animated by Ed Smith and Jack Dazzo, won some praise. *THE NEW YORKER* cartoonist Ed Koren designed the spot. Candy Kugel and Hal Hoffman supervised.

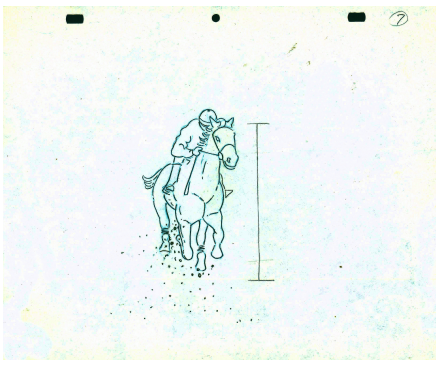


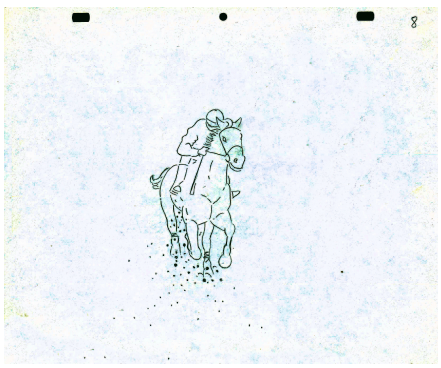
In early 1981 Perpetual produced “Hair Girl”, a 60 second spot for Abound conditioner. J.J. Sedelmaier inbetweened on that frustrating project.

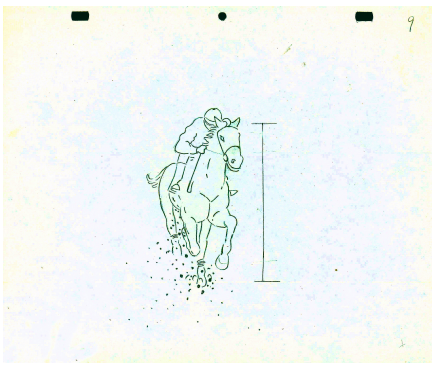


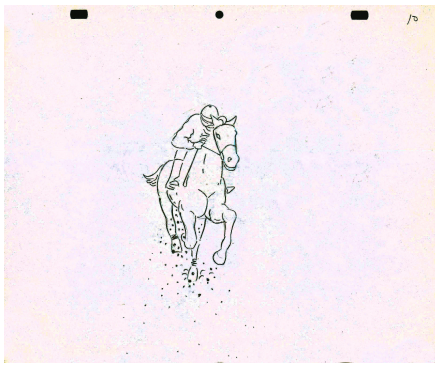
Another bump in the road. Perpetual Motion Pictures laid Dazzo off permanently in October 1981. A whole situation went on where a bunch of Perpetual's management staff broke off to form Buzzco Productions. Dazzo freelanced again: for I.F. Studios; for Cel-Art Productions; and drew a sequence of horses for Brodie Race Track at Bill Feigenbaum Productions

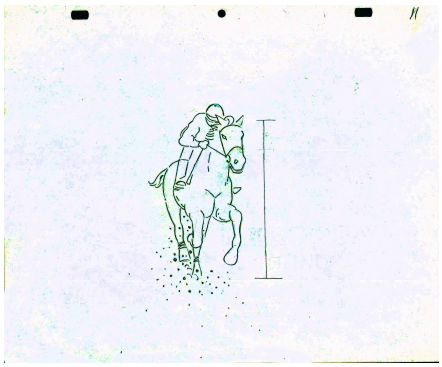




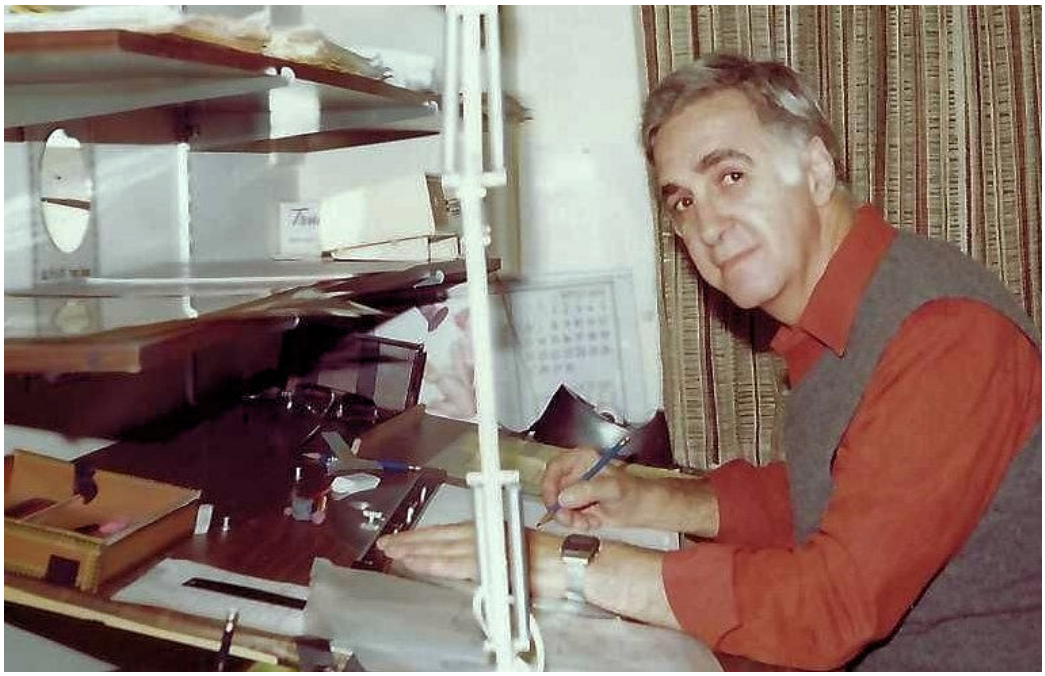






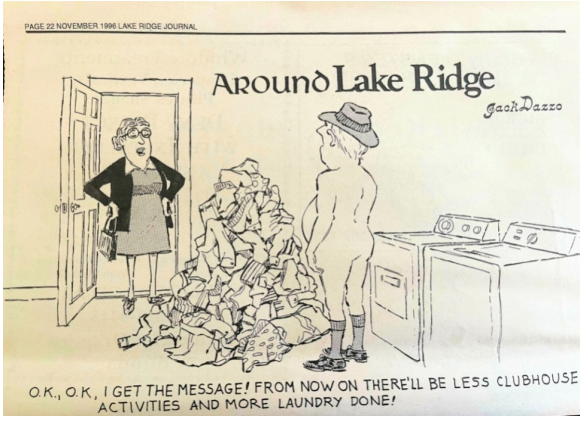


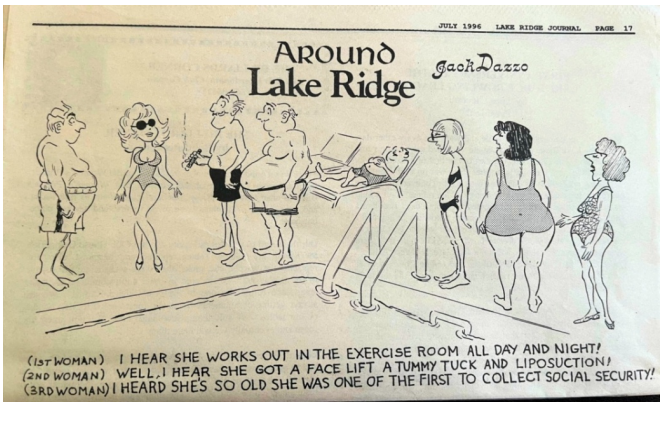
October 1982: Buzzco took Jack on board as a full-time animator.



More Berenstain Bears TV specials and commercials followed at Buzzco, until Dazzo semi-retired during 1983. He freelanced for I.F. Studios, which did a lot of graphics and titles. He was at Kim & Gifford, Prism, and Zander's Animation Parlour. Cel Art Service kept Jack's number handy. Bill Feigenbaum called him in a few times. Perpetual and Buzzco both still relied on him from time-to-time.

In 1986 KCMP, a new firm opened by Phil Kimmelman and Jordan Caldwell, invited Dazzo in for a few days to do an Underoos ad that used the rotoscope to morph a boy into a comic book hero. Jack Dazzo called it a wrap in June of 1987 and withdrew from the Screen Cartoonists Guild, settling into his retirement community. His daughter Diane got him started on watercolors. Jack's daughter Joanne recalls her father's life-long fondness for Disney animation. He created cartoons for the newspaper in his retirement community.

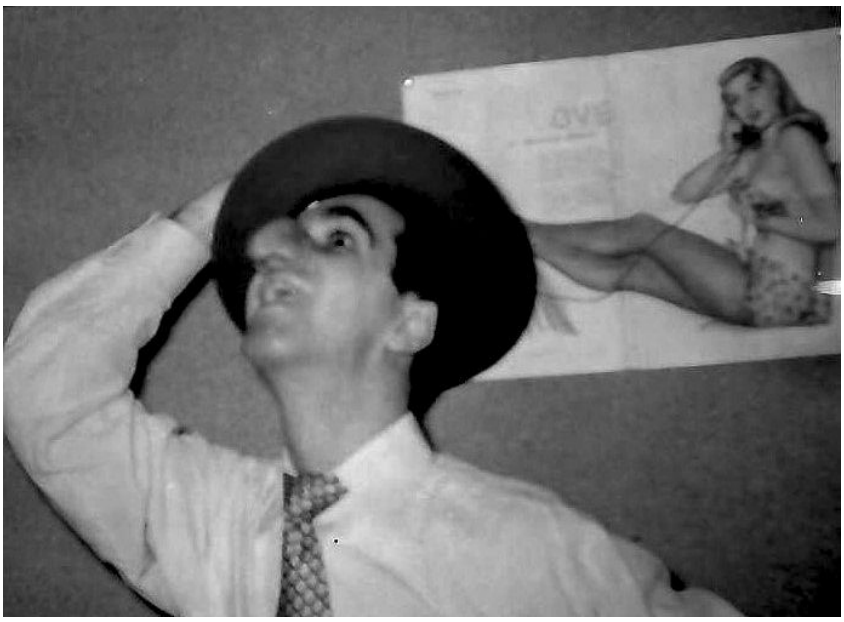




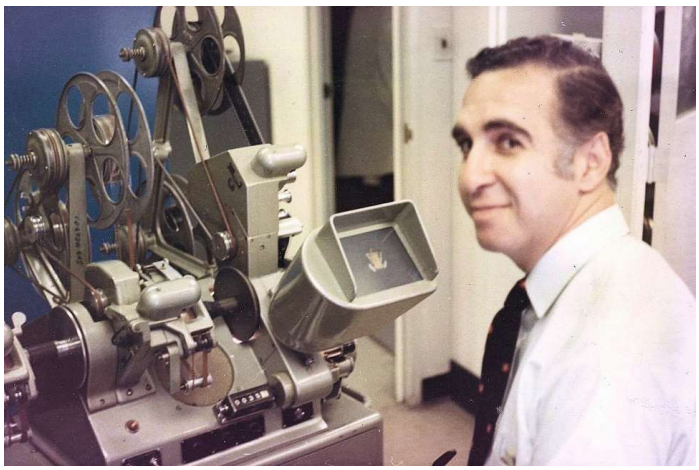
Jack and Terry Dazzo relaxed into a life of socializing. He'd always been noted as easy-going. Kimmelman was wary of ever getting Dazzo excited about a project because of the one lung situation, but Jack got on fine. He played bocce ball, and entertained neighbors with his imitation of Charlie Chaplin.

But Jack had played the comedian since his days at

Famous Studios

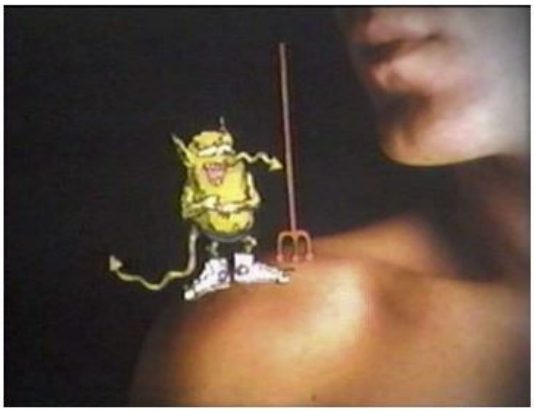


Jack Dazzo's career coincided perfectly with the rise and fall of hand-drawn animated commercials. The new generation with their computer graphics could deal with those annoying advertising agency people now. Dazzo's time behind the pencil no doubt affected society in some little way, amusing millions of people over a span of decades. He must be remembered as one of the truly great animators of the teleblurb age.



Because, frankly, shows like THE ARCHIES and SCOOBY DOO used 'limited' animation *ad nauseum*. We connoisseurs of 'complete' animation relied on TV commercials to provide us our fix of new material. Jack Dazzo's versatility made him an anonymous favorite. He supplied the gamut. Dazzo could do subtle realism, or Pop Art abstraction. Oh! The crazy ad campaigns he worked on.

SCHWEPPE'S CLUB SODA



VOLKSWAGON

So many memories!

You can't expect a personality as vigorous as Jach Dazzo to fully embrace retirement. He needed to pass on some of what he learned.

Animator gave commercials character

Freehold resident now shares skills teaching youth

By Annette Mercurio
Staff writer

Jack Dazzo, a retired animator and director, has almost 40 years of experience in the field of cartoons and commercials. And what better way to share his talents than to teach children lessons in cartooning.

Dazzo, a resident of the Raintree development in Freehold Township, is taking his experience to the classroom to teach children ages 7-14 for the Matawan Student Enrichment Program.

Dazzo worked on cartoon theatricals such as Popeye and Casper the Ghost in the early part of his career.

His work in television includes the Berenstain Bears prime-time features in the early 1980s with producer Buzz Potamkin for NBC-TV.

His commercials include Underoos underwear, a live-action and animated commercial in which children put on their Underoos and become popular cartoon characters.

In his animated commercial for M&M's, the talking chocolate pieces are showered in candy coating.

Animation, he says, is just like acting. "It's something you have inside of you. There are talented artists who cannot animate," he said. "A mediocre artist can become a good animator."

Dazzo noted how tedious, delicate and expensive the animation process can be. An animated film requires approximately 1,400 frames per minute, and animated commercials and television features are limited due to time restraints and budgets.

The pressure is enormous, he said, adding that working in commercials means seven-day work weeks.

Dazzo worked for many different studios throughout his career and had his own company, Peridot Films, from 1970 to 1975.

"I went from working in studios to my own company to freelancing, back and forth," he said.

Dazzo said his proudest moment in his career was in 1969 when he and fellow animator Bob Blechman won the Clio award for an animated commercial. In that work, called "Alka Seltzer Stomach Talk," a man and his stomach sit facing each other while the stomach tells the man what pain the man's eating habits are putting him through.

In some of his other memorable commercials, Dazzo worked with popular characters such as Warner Bros.' Bugs Bunny; Ballantine the comedian/magician and Milton Berle for Yellow Pages; Tony the Tiger for the Kellogg company; and the B.C. comic-strip characters for Marathon, a midwestern gasoline company.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., Dazzo resided in Staten Island before moving to Old Bridge in 1972 with his wife, Terri, and three daughters — Donna, Diane and Joanne. In 1986, he and his wife moved to their current home.

Dazzo began his career in the early 1950s upon graduating from the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn.

"I was trying to get into comics. That was my first love," he said.

But Dazzo said comics were dying because of television, so he tried to get into the fashion industry.

Like many unemployed artists, he was discouraged at first.

For two years, Dazzo was one of two assistants to an animator at Paramount Studios in New York.

Paramount had taken over Max Fleischer Productions, an animation-production company that previously had been competing strongly with Walt Disney Studios.

"I only stayed there to learn," he said.

Next Dazzo worked as an assistant animator for six years, "cleaning up" drawings for the animator, and afterward worked for many other studios.

During the height of his career, the industry was mainly located in California, Chicago and New York and was doing well.

But the industry has split up and is feeling the pressure from competition in other countries such as Japan, Italy, England and Canada, where animation can be produced for 1/6 the price, he said.

For the animators, the decrease in business means less work and less pay.

"The union that started in the 1930s doesn't exist," he said.

Dazzo worked both as an animator and director but said, "My glory is being an animator."

Like the actor, he said, they always get top billing.

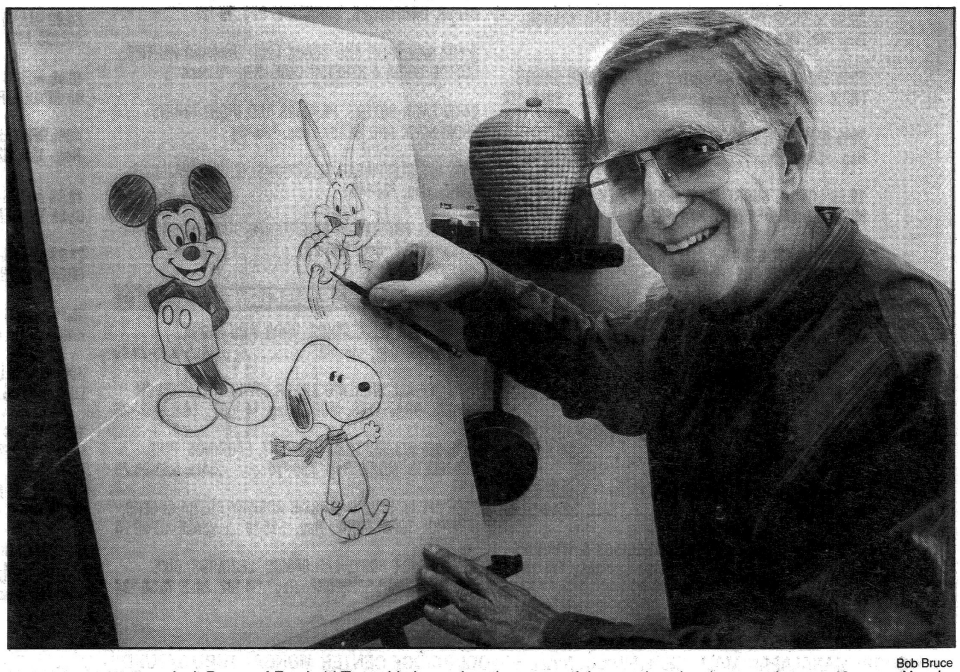
Some of his other television features were Raggedy Ann and Andy, Mr. Magoo, Strawberry Shortcake and the Family Circus.

He admits having a special talent for animating little girls, which he believes comes from being a father of three daughters.

Over the years, Dazzo's wife has collected drawings, tapes, newspaper clippings and other momentos.

She also has a copy of *Of Mice and Magic: a History of American Animated Cartoons* by Leonard Maltin, which includes a mention of Dazzo and some of his work.

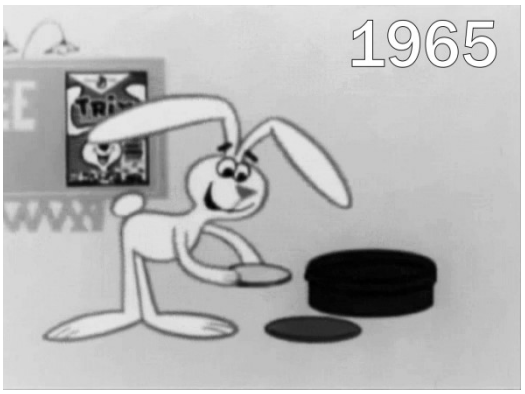
Dazzo now is a teacher and the artist of a single-panel cartoon for the Raintree Review, a community newsletter.

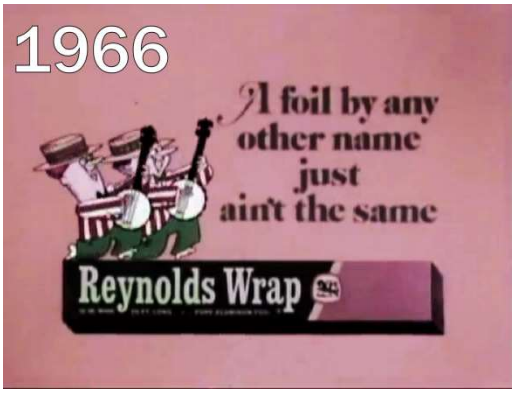


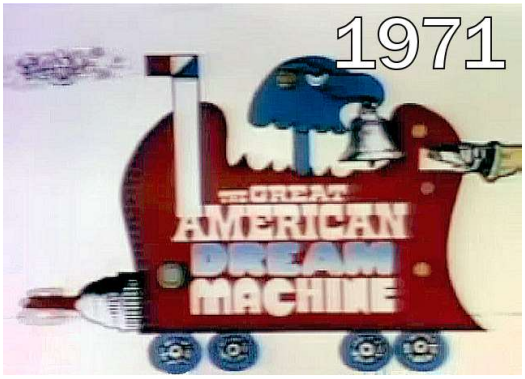
Bob Bruce

CARTOON CAREER — *Jack Dazzo of Freehold Township has enjoyed a successful career in animation over the past 40 years. Now he takes his knowledge to the classroom to teach children what he knows about the animation industry.*

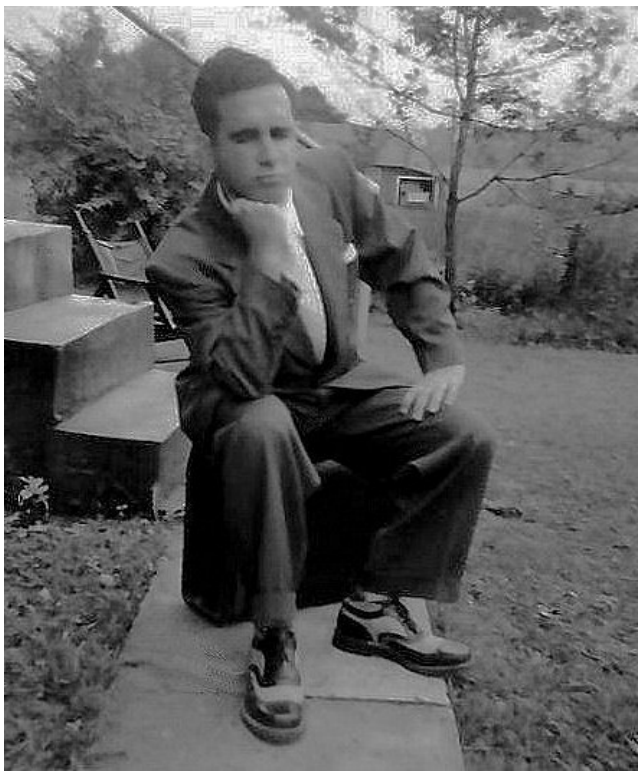
Jack Dazzo passed away in 2018, just shy of his 92nd birthday. In a way, he'd been one of my teachers as well, inspiring me to new approaches in my own art, I'd been a fan of his since about the age of six.





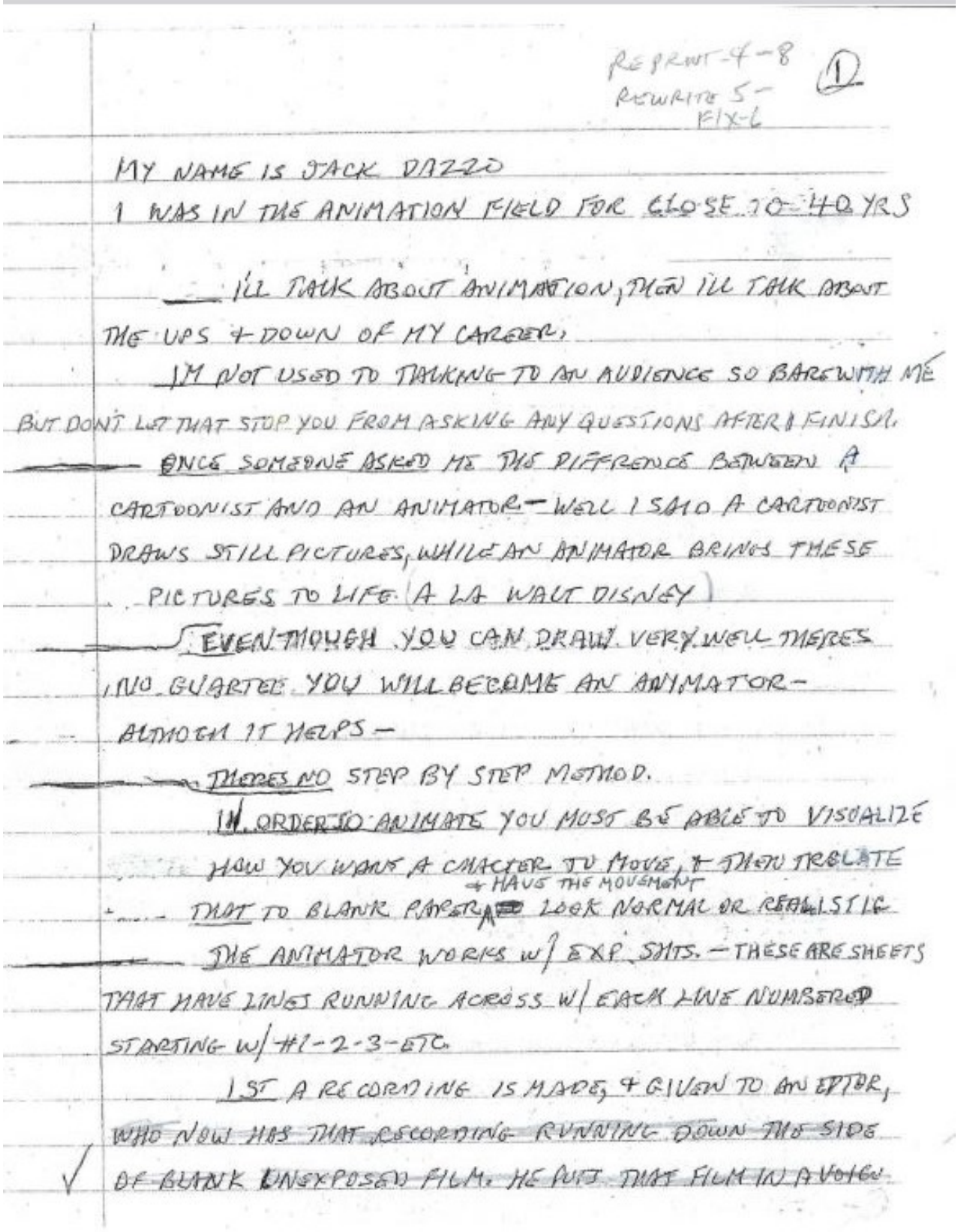


Many thanks to Donna Dazzo for her patience and assistance in preparing this article.



THAT BOY FROM BROOKLYN

Here is Jack Dazzo in his own words.



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(1)

MY NAME IS JACK DAZZO
I WAS IN THE ANIMATION FIELD FOR CLOSE TO 40 YRS

I'LL TALK ABOUT ANIMATION, THEN I'LL TALK ABOUT THE UPS + DOWN OF MY CAREER.

I'M NOT USED TO TALKING TO AN AUDIENCE SO BARE WITH ME BUT DON'T LET THAT STOP YOU FROM ASKING ANY QUESTIONS AFTER I FINISH.

ONCE SOMEONE ASKED ME THE DIFFRENCE BETWEEN A CARTOONIST AND AN ANIMATOR — WELL I SAID A CARTOONIST DRAWS STILL PICTURES, WHILE AN ANIMATOR BRINGS THESE PICTURES TO LIFE. (A LA WALT DISNEY)

EVEN THOUGH YOU CAN DRAW VERY WELL THERES NO GUARTEE YOU WILL BECOME AN ANIMATOR — ALTHOUGH IT HELPS —

THERES NO STEP BY STEP METHOD.

IN ORDER TO ANIMATE YOU MUST BE ABLE TO VISUALIZE HOW YOU WANT A CHACTER TO MOVE, + THEN TRANSLATE THAT TO BLANK PAPER + HAVE THE MOVEMENT LOOK NORMAL OR REALISTIC

THE ANIMATOR WORKS W/ EXP. SHTS. — THESE ARE SHEETS THAT HAVE LINES RUNNING ACROSS W/ EACH LINE NUMBERED STARTING W/ #1-2-3-ETC.

1ST A RECORDING IS MADE, + GIVEN TO AN EDITOR, WHO NOW HAS THAT RECORDING RUNNING DOWN THE SIDE OF BLANK UNEXPOSED FILM. HE PUTS THAT FILM IN A VOICE

HE
: MARKS DOWN ON THE EXP. SHTS ~~ON EACH LINE THAT IS~~
WHERE EACH WORD BEGINS & ENDS.

THE ANIMATOR NOW WORKS W/ THE EXP SHTS & A RECORDING THAT HE CAN LISTEN TO

IF YOU CAN THINK OF AN ANIMATOR AS AN ACTOR W/A PENCIL & JUST LIKE ACTORS W/ THE SAME SCRIPT. YOU'LL FIND EXCELLENT, GOOD, OR MEDIOCRE ANIMATORS.

THE ANIMATOR LISTENS TO THE RECORDING MANY TIMES IN ORDER TO DECIDE HOW HE'S GOING TO ANIMATE THAT CHARACTER.

SINCE THERE ARE 24 FRAMES PER SECOND IF HE DOESN'T PUT THE RIGHT AMT. OF DRAWINGS & SPACING BETWEEN THE FIGURES, THE MOVEMENT WILL BE EITHER TOO SLOW OR TOO FAST OR NOT LOOK: REALISTIC OR NATURAL

EVEN THOUGH THE ANIMATOR IS CONSIDERED THE STAR, — ANIMATION IS A GROUP EFFORT. IT ENTAILS A STORY BOARD PERSON THAT DOES A SINGLE DWG SET UP OF EACH SCENE IN THE PICTURE, AN ANIMATOR W/ 2 ASSISTANTS MANY INKERS WHO INK ON CELLULOIDS & PAINTERS TO PAINT THEM AND BACKGROUND ARTISTS & A CAMERMAN WHO SHOOTS ONE FRAME OF PICTURE AT A TIME.

BY THE WAY THERE ARE 1440 FRAMES FOR 1-MINUTE & 720 FOR 30 SEC'S, WHICH MOST COMMERCIALS ARE, SO YOU CAN UNDERSTAND WHY IT TAKES AT LEAST 5 WKS TO DO A 30 SEC. ANIMATED COMM'L & THAT'S EVERYONE WORKING AT MAXIMUM SPEED.

ONE REASON YOU SAW LESS & LESS ANIMATED COMM'S THRU THE YEARS WAS, — WHEN VIDEO TAPE CAME OUT

LIVE COMMERCIALS COULD BE SHOT & LOOKED AT IMMEDIATELY & THEN COULD BE CORRECTED RIGHT AWAY.

SO FOR SOME ADVERTISING AGENCYS ANIMATED COMMERCIALS WERE CONSIDERED A HINDERENCE.

SOME PEOPLE HAVE ASKED ME HOW I GOT INTO THE ANIMATION FIELD. BEFORE I ANSWER THAT I'LL START FROM THE BEGINNING. I STARTED DRAWING ABOUT THE AGE OF 7., & AT THAT TIME COMICS WHERE LIKE THE VIDEO GAMES OF TODAYS GENERATION.

DRAWING & COPYING THEM WAS THE NATURAL THING FOR ME TO DO.

WHEN I WAS 16 I WROTE TO WALT DISNEY TO ASK IF I COULD WORK FOR HIM. HIS ANSWER WAS I WOULD HAVE TO BE A RESIDENT OF LOS ANGELES BEFORE I COULD BE CONSIDERED.

BECAUSE OF MY AGE MY FATHER & MOTHER WOULDN'T HEAR OF IT.

AFTER HIGH SCH'L I WENT TO PRATT. INST' WHICH IS A RENOWN ART SCHOOL. THERE I STUDIED ILLUSTRATION, WHICH MEANT ILLUSTRATING IN BOOKS, MAGAZINES, PAPERS ETC.

→ BUT AFTER 3 YRS I QUIT & DECIDED TO GO BACK TO MY FIRST LOVE COMIC BOOKS. BUT AFTER 6 MO'S I HAD NO LUCK. YOU SEE THE INDUSTRY WAS SLOWLY DYING & PEOPLE WERE BEING LET GO. AS TELIVISION AT THAT TIME WAS BECOMMING A BIGGER ATTRACTION, FOR CHILDREN & ADULTS.

ANYWAY ABOUT THAT TIME, IN THE EARLY 50s MY AUNT TOLD ME A FRIEND OF HERS WAS WORKING IN PARAMOUNT PICTURES, & THAT THE ANIMATION SET UP WAS IN N.Y.C. ON 45 ST. — I DIDN'T BELIEVE IT, BUT I WENT ANYWAY

I TOOK MY COMIC STRIPS THAT I HAD DONE & THEY WERE GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME TO BE HIRED AT $35.00 A WEEK. — AFTER AN APPRENTICESHIP PERIOD I WAS MADE AN ASS'T TO THE ASSISTANT ANIM-R/ I HAD TO DRAW ONE DRAWING BETWEEN EACH DRAWING THAT WAS ALREADY DONE/AFTER A PERIOD OF TIME I FINALY MADE $55.00 PER WEEK

SO FOR THE NEXT 2 YRS I WORKED ON POPEYE CASPER DOGHOSE, PLUS OTHER CHARACTERS

AT THE END OF THAT TIME I BECAME A FULL ASST ANIMATOR. ALSO AT THAT TIME TELEVISION ANIMATED COMMERCIALS WERE BECOMING POPULAR & THERE WAS A DEMAND FOR PEOPLE.

— SO A LOT OF PEOPLE WERE LEAVING TO GO INTO TELEVISION ANIMATION STUDIOS. — AT ITS HEIGHT THERE WERE PROBABLY 15 OR 20 STUDIOS IN MIDTOWN MANHATTEN

SO I LEFT & WENT TO A STUDIO CALLED SHAMUS CULHANE'S. HE WAS ONE OF THE MAJOR ANIMATORS WHO HAD WORKED ON ~~THE 7 DWARFS~~ SNOW WHITE & THE 7 DWARFS.

AFTER I WAS THERE A WHILE SHAMUS FELT I WAS READY TO ANIMATE. EVEN THOUGH I FELT I WASN'T.

SO WHAT DID HE DO, HE GAVE ME A 10 SEC COMMERCIAL W/ NO TIME TO DO ANYTHING OVER. IT WAS A MARCHING MAJORETTE BEFORE TWIRLER, & ON TOP OF THAT IT WAS GOING TO BE SHOWN ON THE SUPER BOWL. LUCKILY FOR ME IT TURNED OUT O.K.

PEOPLE HAVE SAID TO ME, — BOY THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A GREAT & ENJOYABLE PROFESSION TO BE IN.

I WOULD THINK TO MYSELF, IF THEY ONLY KNEW — YOU SEE THE PROBLEM WAS MOST OF THE TIME ADVERTISING AGENCIES WOULD NEVER GIVE YOU ENOUGH TIME TO DO THE COMMERCIAL, AS THEY USED THE TIME ~~WRITING & CREATING~~ THE COMMERCIAL.

WE USUALLY NEEDED ABOUT 5 WKS, WITH 15 OR 20 PEOPLE TO DO A 30 SEC COMM'L, THERE WAS NEVER TIME TO DO IT OVER. SO IF A PROBLEM OR MISTAKE ARISE OR THE CLIENT DIDN'T LIKE SOMETHING, — WE WOULD HAVE TO STAY, EVEN IF IT MEANT STAYING ALL NIGHT LONG. WE WOULD THEN CONTINUE WORKING ALL THRU THE NEXT DAY.

WITH ALL I

THAT I COMPARED IT TO

AFTER IT WAS

WHY WE DIDN'T HIRE MORE PEOPLE TAKES TOO LONG TO EXPLAIN, — AS IT ENTAILS UNION COSTS, ETC.

NEXT 6 WKS MILLIONS & MILLIONS OF PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE U.S. WOULD BE SEEING WHAT I DID — EVEN THOUGH MY NAME WASN'T ON THE COMMERCIAL, IT MADE ME FEEL GOOD.

I WOULD COMPARE IT TO A FINE ARTIST. ~~[illegible]~~ EVEN THOUGH HIS PAINTINGS WERE IN MANY MUSEUMS, BUT HE STILL WOULDN'T HAVE THAT MANY PEOPLE LOOKING AT HIS WORK

THE PROUDEST MOMENT OF MY LIFE CAME IN 1970 WHEN I WON THE CLIO AWARD IN T.V. FOR MY ALKA SELTZER STOMACH TALK COMMERCIAL. IT'S GIVEN FOR LIVE ACTION & ANIMATION COMMERCIALS, & ITS THE HIGHEST AWARD GIVEN ON TV - SIMILAR TO THE ACADEMY AWARDS.

IN THE COMM'L THE STOMACH ANGRILY TELLS THE MAN ALL THE PAIN HIS EATING HABITS ARE PUTTING HIM THROUGH, - ESPECIALLY WHEN EATING AT HIS MOTHERS. THE MAN THEN SAYS "YOU ALWAYS HATED MY MOTHER. THE STOMACH YELLS BACK "AND YOUR ALWAYS EATING PEPERONI PIZZA, OR HOT TAMALES ETC

PAUSE

WHEN I WAS TOLD IT WOULD BE A 1 MINUTE COMMERCIAL I THOUGHT TO MYSELF, "WHAT THE HECK AM I GOING TO HAVE THEM DO FOR A WHOLE MINUTE, WHILE FACING EACH OTHER. HOW MANY TIMES CAN I HAVE THEM LEANING BACK & FORTH AND YELLING AT EACH OTHER, BUT BY LISTENING TO EACH PHRASE AND THE WAY THEY SAID IT I WAS ABLE TO MAKE IT FUNNY & INTERESTING. ONE OF THE THINGS I DID, WHILE THE STOMACH IS SHOUTING AT THE MAN I HAD HIM STAND ON THE CHAIR, WHILE HES... WAVING HIS HANDS & ARMS WILDLY, HE LEANS FORWARD & FALLS OFF THE CHAIR FLAT ON HIS STOMACH.

HE THEN TURNS AROUND, ~~GETS~~ UP ON THE CHAIR, WITH HIS FANNEY STICKING UP, THE CHAIR SWIVELS BACK & FORTH.

SO BECAUSE OF THE CLEVER DIALOG, THE WRITER GOT AN AWARD FOR WRITING & I GOT THE AWARD FOR ANIMATION

SOME OTHER COMM'S I DID WERE THE M.+M'S WHERE THEY DIVE INTO THE POOL & COME OUT CANDY COATED. I ALSO DID MANY CEREAL COMM'S, LIKE SUGAR BEAR & HONEY COMB COMM'S-LIKE THE HULK, PLUS A HUNDRED OR MORE.

I ALSO WORKED ON ½ HR FEATURES THAT RAN IN PRIME TIME AT NITE AT 8 O'CLOCK, SUCH AS THE FAMILY CIRCLE, THE BERENSTAIN BEARS, & MR. MA GOO, & RAGGEDY ANN & ANDY.

PAUSE — IN 1970 AFTER I WON THE CLIO AWARD WHILE WORKING AT A STUDIO CALLED ELEKTRA FILMS, — A LIVE ACTION DIRECTOR, - I & A PRODUCER LEFT & FORMED OUR OWN COMPANY CALLED .... PERIODT FILMS.

AFTER ABOUT 4 YRS WE DECIDED TO MOVE TO A NEW LOCATION ON 2ND AVE BETWEEN 44 & 45 ST. IN MANHATTAN — IT WAS THE TOP FLOOR OF A 27 STORY BUILDING THAT HAD A SPIRAL STAIRCASE GOING OUT ON TO THE ROOF. — ON FRIDAY WE MOVED ALL OUR EQUIPMENT INTO THE STUDIO, SO WE COULD START WORK MONDAY MORNING. — BUT ON MON'Y MORNING AT 6:45 AM THE ENTIRE BUILDING BLEW UP, BECAUSE OF A GAS LEAK THAT HAD GONE FROM THE BASEMENT UP THRU' THE ELEVATOR SHAFT.

NO ONE WAS IN THE BUILDING AT THAT TIME, BUT IT AFFECTED NOT ONLY THAT BLOCK, BUT BOTH BLOCKS ON EACH SIDE. — LUCKILY NO ONE WAS KILLED, BUT OVER 80 PEOPLE WERE INJURED WITH MANY OF THEM HOSPITALIZED. — WITH NO PLACE TO WORK & ALL OUR EQUIPMENT GONE WE DECIDED TO SPLIT UP. THE LIVE ACTION DIRECTOR WENT TO CALIFONIA TO WORK & THE PROD'R GOT A JOB IN A LARGE LIVE ACTION COMPANY. SO I DECIDED TO DO FREE LANCE ANIMATION.

ANOTHER AWARD I GOT WAS THE A.S.I.F.A AWARD WHICH IS A NATIONAL AWARD FOR A COMM'L CALLED "METOMORPHISIS" THAT WAS FOR A BRAND NEW PRODUCT CALLED, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, "ZONKERS" IT WAS A PRODUCT CLOSE TO CRACKER JACKS THERES A STORY HERE, BUT IT DOESN'T INVOLVE THE AWARD(MUS BEFORE I STARTED ON IT A MEETING WAS CALLED BY THE ADVT'ING EVEN A LAWYER AGENCY. THERE WERE 6 OR 7 PEOPLE, TO DISCUSS THE COMM'L ABOUT A MAN WHO HAS A PROBLEM WALKING WITH HIS LEG, THEY SAID I HAD TO MAKE SURE I WOULD NOT OFFEND ANYONE HE WOULD THEN EAT THE 'ZONKERS" & METOMORPHIS INTO A HANDSOME GUY, WALK NORMAL, WITH HIS MALADY GONE.

WELL I'M THINKING TO MYSELF, - WITH ALL THESE GENIUSES HERE THEY WANT ME TO START A COMM'L TOMORROW & COME UP WITH A SOLUTION OF A GUY WITH A DEFORMED LEG - BUT NOT OFFEND ANYONE.

NEEDLESS TO SAY I NEVER SLEPT THRU THE ENTIRE NITE. I KEPT THINKING ABOUT ANIMALS LEGS THAT I COULD USE AS A GUIDE. I WAS IN & OUT OF BED ALL NITE & NO SOLUTION BY MORNING.

WHILE I WAS ON THE TRAIN & EXHAUSTED, - I REALIZED WHEN HE WALKS WHILE A HUMANS LEG BENDS FORWARD A CHICKENS LEG BENDS BACKWARD. - SO EVERY TIME THE GUY TOOK A STEP FORWARD, WHEN HIS FOOT HIT THE GROUND, HIS LEG WOULD SNAP BACKWARD, WITH A SNAPPING SOUND. OF COURSE HE ATE THE "ZONKERS", GOT CURED & BECAME HANDSOME, - BUT I GOT THE AWARD FOR THE ANIMATION, - NOT FOR SOLVING THE PROBLEM

ONE COMMERCIAL I DID ENJOY DOING WAS FOR YELLOW PAGES BOOK.

USING BUGS BUNNY WITH MILTON BERLE IN IT, BOTH ARE SITTING IN A CHAIR, — MILTON GETS UP & TALKS ABOUT THE Y-P'S BOOK AS BUGS KEEPS INTURUPTING HIM.

FINALY AT THE END OF THE COMMERCIAL MILTON SAYS "I CAN'T BELIEVE IM IN A COMMERCIAL TALKING TO A CARTOON RABBIT.

TO SUM IT ALL UP EVEN W/ THE PRESSURS & PROBLEMS, IT WAS A GREAT FEELING TO KNOW I COULD MAKE THE CHARACTERS WALK, TALK, DANCE & SING TO EVERYBODYS SATISFACTION, & SEE IT ON TELEVISION, WAS WORTH IT ALL.